

A place of life:

On bioregionalism in East Price Hill, Cincinnati Research Thesis

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by

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract:

Bioregionalism has been an important theoretical framework within popular environmentalist literature for over two decades. According to this philosophy, reinhabitation of “bioregions” will commit human beings to a natural and universal knowledge of where they are, thereby holistically reconnecting them with the earth, life, and each other. Troubling, though, is the meaning of “bioregion:” from the early environmentally determinist conception of Kirkpatrick Sale to the synthesis of landscape and consciousness espoused by Peter Berg, framing a bioregion has been murky even for its most strident apologists. Even further, from its very beginnings in early Western philosophy, the more general concept of place has been discussed with no less ambiguity. Through a philosophical inquiry dating back to Aristotle, I argue that bioregions have been so difficult to define precisely because the underlying metaphysical assumption of place—as something that is unitary, clearly demarcated, and differentiated from other places—is erroneous. The texts from these philosophers, along with the bioregional practices that I investigate in East Price Hill, Cincinnati, force a coming to terms with a conception of place that is better understood as space *qua* difference. Place, in other words, is the process by which space is intuited, differentiated, and represented by the living human subject. But these representation that we eventually describe as “places” are not simply open to anyone's interpretation: they are the spatial manipulation of hegemony, of power settled geographically. To invoke place as such—as space *qua* difference—is to necessarily invoke a matrix of power that is tasked with concretizing and making universal the arrangement of different places. Hence, what I show in the case of East Price Hill is that the politics of place-based resistance, e.g. an ecovillage, always already invokes a dynamics of power—that is, Capital-Nation-State—precisely by assuming a certain metaphysics of place. To upend the geography of the modern social formation would require a new interpretation of the relation between place and space, one not based on difference but on singularity.

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I. Introduction

The Aporia of Place

This research began as a social science investigation into the presence of an ecovillage in East Price Hill, Cincinnati, known as the Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage (ERUEV). Ecovillages, as described by Gilman, are “human-scale, full-featured settlements in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development, and which can be successfully continued into the indefinite” (1991: 10). I had originally intended to perform research of this particular ecovillage through the confrontation of a core concept of living in an ecovillage: bioregionalism. According to Dodge, a bioregion is etymologically a “life territory, place of life, or perhaps by reckless extension, government by life” where the “central element” is the “importance given to natural systems, both as the source of physical nutrition and as the body of metaphors from which our spirits draw sustenance” ([1981] 2007: 341). For Dodge—though, it is important to note, by no means for every bioregionalist—the ‘region’ of bioregion is best defined through an assemblage of distinctions including “biotic shift, watershed, land form, cultural/phenomenological, spirit presences, and elevation” ([1981] (2007): 344). The other central elements that constitute bioregionalism according to Dodge are “anarchy” and “spirit” ([1981] 2007: 344-345). Hence, bioregionalism is the practice of synthesizing and concretizing regionalism, anarchy, and spirituality into a new politics of place.

In one way or another, all of these elements have found their way into East Price Hill. Region was the easiest to see, for all of the practices intended to localize and situate each individual life into a knowable, livable place which everyone held in communion. This was the

intent of the community-supported agriculture program; it was the intent of the permaculture workshops, the seminars on ecological sustainability, the potlucks, the community newsletters, the retrofitting and greening of houses, and virtually every practice Enright Ridge has performed since 2004. Several original members, in fact, had been active in bioregional forums and congresses across the country, so thinking in terms of “life territory” was indeed historically and spatially prevalent. Spirituality was also a clear element of their founding, probably most evident by the fact that upon my first arrival to the ecovillage, I was handed a book entitled *What Does God Look Like in an Expanding Universe?* edited by Enright Ridge's founder, Jim Schenk (2006). Within this collection of essays, there is an attempt to rework Western Christian metaphysics to be in better harmony with the earth and build toward a new cosmology.

The last element, anarchy, was more difficult to find. I came to the conclusion that this was not because it did not appear, but because insofar as it does, it subsumes into a larger, more dominating structure that explicitly forbids it. Hence, the ecovillagers, even the most anarchist among them, work jobs in the city, own private property, and—like the rest of us—openly practice various forms of exclusion. The ecovillage, I learned, is not for everyone: it is not for those suspicious Appalachians that roam around in the forest behind Enright Ridge, and its ethic rootedness is contradictory to the “influx of transient renters” that had impeded the founding of an ecovillage in East Price Hill prior to the arrival of Enright Ridge (Schenk 2006:1). It is not as if the ecovillage lacks self-critique to this point, however. Faherty (2014), while noting how white the ecovillage appears against ethnic heterogeneity of the surrounding community, also quotes the conscious desire of an ecovillager to address this issue: “I just need to walk over with a plate of cookies and say: 'Hi, my name's Jeff, and this is what we are doing over here.'” Such a

response, I felt, does not seem to address a racism that is deeply and profoundly historical, geographical, and structural. The element of any sort of political and/or radical systemic critique, let alone anarchism, seemed to be at best silenced if not entirely absent. Rather, the discourse in Enright Ridge played toward *realpolitik*, where critiques of state violence—race-, class-, or gender-based—if at all considered, would turn more potential white, middle-class members off than it would make the ecovillage more viable.

As a result, my research began as a kind of lambasting of the always-present oppression of the poor and people of color and the overwhelming insufficiency of any response to this problem in ecologically-oriented communities, even among those bleeding heart liberals who should undoubtedly 'know better.' I feared the “misanthropic strain,” noted by Bookchin (Bookchin and Foreman 1991: 16) originating in deep ecology that finds itself ever-present in environmentalism today, so much of which is taken up by lamenting the population problem and speaking of 'carrying capacity.'¹ It is this kind of willful ignorance of social theory and gleeful indifference to the plight of the oppressed that led someone like Dave Foreman, a figure so critical for the early environmentalist movement Earth First!, to urge letting 'nature' seek out its own balance and allow Ethiopian children to starve (Foreman 1991: 43). The Marxist critique of Greenpeace Canada, 1971-2000, by Harter (2004) rang true for me upon the reading of its very title: “Environmental Justice for Whom?” Hence, I felt that social justice was indeed being lost in the pursuit of environmental justice, that structures of power were obscured in the quest to 'save the Earth,' and no clearer example could be found than in a white, guilt-laden, middle-class, and college-educated “eco-refuge” (a term from Verstraeten & Verstraeten 2014). It seemed as if

¹ Bioregionalism is by no means saved in this specific call toward 'carrying capacity.' See Taylor 2000 as well as Figure 5 in the Appendix.

underlying class and race relations had been all but forgotten through rashly subsuming *every* crisis with some mystical spirituality, leaving all believers dedicating their entire lives to the Earth First! slogan: “No Compromise in the Defense of Mother Earth!”

But to wholly condemn environmentalism in general or Enright Ridge specifically, I have concluded, is a shallow and hypocritical approach. It is shallow in the sense that, again, the only thing I confront by such a polemic is Enright Ridge as it appears to me, an outsider, bringing to bear the full weight of a global structure onto a handful of environmentalists in Cincinnati and shouting at them “not good enough!” As a result, I myself would lose sight of the personal and spiritual transformation of so many people there on their genuine desire to treat others and the earth with dignity. On top of this, such a critique is hypocritical: Yes, it is true, a collection of 80-100 people trying to live in sustainability are not upending racism nor capitalism in one night—but who, exactly, is? Who am I, after all, to come into Enright Ridge and complain that they are not being radical enough? How am I exactly—coming from a public, land-grant university quite heavily invested in imperial science, with my possibility of research made possible precisely by the system that I so deeply lament—contributing to 'resistance' here?

Instead of writing the project off, I looked deeper for the anarchist element. I remember receiving a CrimethInc zine a few years ago that tried to simply and succinctly explain anarchism. It read:

You may already be an Anarchist. It's true. If your idea of healthy human relations is dinner with friends, where everyone enjoys everyone else's company, responsibilities are divided up voluntarily and informally, and no one gives orders or sells anything, then you are an anarchist, plain and simple. The only question that remains is how you can arrange

for more of your interactions to resemble this model...Anarchism is naturally present in every healthy human being. It isn't necessarily about throwing bombs or black masks...The root of anarchism is the simple impulse to do it yourself: everything else follows from this (“fighting for our lives: an anarchist primer”: 4).

Enright Ridge is certainly anarchistic in this sense, but the truth is also that the capacity to be an anarchist, the ability to arrange “more of your interactions to resemble this model” has so far seemed quite limited. Enright Ridge is at best, after all, marginal 'resistance' with respect to a global structure—as are the anarchist communes in rural Virginia, the Zapatistas, the Kurds in Rojava, and any other more pronounced radical group aspiring to the status of revolutionary.

To try and explain Enright Ridge as 'marginal' then became my task. Why, in other words, does 'anarchism' never take the center? What interested me especially about Enright Ridge is that the inner workings of bioregional practice could be identified spatially as it interacts with a power settled geographically. Perhaps, I considered, my contribution to 'resistance' in writing this paper could be in the expounding of this particular relation as it manifests in space and place. Thus, the question shifted from “why is Enright Ridge failing with respect to social justice?” to “why does Enright Ridge exist in space the way that it does?”

To this end, it is my personal conviction that any sufficient answer to this question will only emerge through continued critical and theoretical reflection. To do this, any aspirations that this could be a scientific paper had to be dropped. What is defined below is well departed from any kind of social science, although a Marxist framework still reveals itself in the third chapter when discussing the politics of place. The intent, however, has shifted from that of a normative critique of Enright Ridge, centered around race and class relations, to one that attempts to present

a political ontology by considering the possibility and extent of resistance given a quite penetrating and globalized modern social formation. This is best described in Karatani's model of Capital-Nation-State which will be explained in depth in the third chapter. It should be sufficient to say here, though, that what I attempt to say with respect to the direct politics of place is that bioregionalism in theory becomes markedly different in practice in East Price Hill, and this transition is evident of its imbrication into a political geography of difference subordinate to capital, nation, and state. Enright Ridge, in other words, could only exist as it does insofar as it remains marginal.

This is partly due to the fact that bioregionalism as such is directly antagonistic to the fundamental tenets of the world system. Verstreten and Verstraeten (2014) somewhat echo this point:

The actual dominant development paradigm of perpetual progress and global market economy and the supporting representative democracy failed to establish social justice and wellness for all and destroyed the sustainability of the planet. In consequence, the ideas of the [Enlightenment] Era and its rationale clash with the frontiers of Earth's ecological sustainability (786).

But it is critical to remember that it is not simply the ideals of the Enlightenment Era; it is the entire structure of modernity—that is, the modern social formation of Capital-Nation-State. Most directly and apparently, environmental sustainability is counter to the capitalist mode of exchange. There cannot be sustainability on a finite world that is governed by a system of relations that by definition demands accumulation and compound growth. But what Karatani does by including Nation and State into a Borromean knot of all three is to say that no extension

of this trinity could exist without the other two. Thus, in what follows (chapter three), how capitalism antagonizes bioregionalism is explained, but I also attempt to heed attention and critique to every part of the modern social formation.

I realized, however, that even such a political ontology is insufficient to answering the question of why Enright Ridge exists *in space* the way that it does. To approach this question, one must consider the concepts of space and place in all of their respective metaphysical standings. To do so, however, as I will show in chapter two, is unsettling. Upon investigating the philosophies of space and place from Aristotle to Kant and onward toward Heidegger and Harvey, I came to the conclusion that such concepts are alarmingly difficult to resolutely define. Given the overarching social formation of Capital-Nation-State, the furthest I believe it is presently possible to reach is to say that place is space *qua* difference, but this leaves wholly open and unanswerable the concept of space—this is not the end of the story, however, as we shall see in chapter four. Kant, it seems, was the first in this line of philosophers that rightly identified space as something that exists beyond what is knowable, as beyond and anterior to representation. This unanswerability is what I have come to define as the *aporia* of place.

This leads to a quite debilitating problem when I try to speak of a politics of place in East Price Hill. Place, it appears, relies on a concept which cannot be known as such, and yet all involved—ecovillagers, theorists, and myself—speak of place as something which is knowable. How is this possible? I hope to show that the *aporia* is not by any means resolved but only ever covered over. The problem of difference that exists by virtue of us being subjects, living bodies distinct from each other, is hence contained—or, rather, ignored—by appealing to an assumed commonality, whether it be in the shared nexus of money, the state, or, today in

environmentalism, 'Mother Earth.' All of these require a degree of unfreedom, of asymmetry and the subsumption of all under one particular view of one particular subject. At the same time, as we shall see in the case of East Price Hill, one in practice tends to 'win out' despite the aspirations toward others, and that is the common social formation of Capital-Nation-State. In the case of Enright Ridge, this is done so through the geographic distribution of 'places' which marginalizes some and makes central others; and, insofar as Enright Ridge is an act of bioregional resistance, it is compelled to such spatial rearrangement just the same. Its 'place' is on the margins, and this is all it could ever be given its inherent antagonisms to the prevailing structure. Hence, in sum, the problem of place is wholly, unnervingly aporetic, the gap or 'doubt' of which is a position assumed by power and settled geographically.

What started out as social science has thenceforth aspired to be poetry. For better or for worse, this is all I could ever have hoped to write.

II. The Philosophy of Place

Framing Place

Before I can begin to discuss the problem of place, there must be a firm understanding of the language and literature of place that will be deployed. Though what will be seen lying beneath bioregionalism is a theoretical and practical problematic far beyond the present detailing of its origins, illuminating the intellectual history of some of the pertinent concepts will nevertheless help as a first step in grounding this 'transparent' framework of place within which the answers to place have been proposed. I say 'transparent' here because always running alongside this metaphysics and any subsequent semiotics—as occurs in every single reference to place in this chapter—a theory of place 'feels' detached, floating over the corpse of whatever each text theorizes to be lying there 'in place'. Transparency thus denotes that always something seemingly lies beyond—or, perhaps, nothing, but a nothing that makes the framework of place no less dubious. The transparent framework is hence in itself unsatisfying and, somewhat ironically, the feeling of transparency here is an effect of the aporia of place. What I mean by this is to say that the feeling of detachment, of permeability and uncertainty hints at the unanswerability of place. Philosophical investigation does not triangulate but the exact opposite: it throws us; it makes us no more understandable of what we try to signify when we say, “place.”

The transparent quality and discomfort of what will be the suggested framework is a deliberate nod to Marx's phrasing of commodity fetishism as *gespenstige Gerganstandlichkeit* within the social process under capitalism—originally translated into English as 'phantom-like objectivity' but corrected by Heinrich (2012), among others, as one that is 'spectral.' This term, according to Heinrich, while often attributed to Marx as some sort of stylistic ornament,

nevertheless penetrates quite deeply into his comments on political economy:

...with these descriptions Marx took aim at a central issue of the critique of political economy, namely, that the *naturalization and reification* of social relationships is in no way the result of a mistake by individual economists, but rather the result of an image of reality that develops independently as result of the everyday practice of the members of bourgeois society...'the bewitched, distorted and upside-down world' (Capital, 3:969)...*is* not only the basis of everyday consciousness, but also constitutes the background for the categories of political economy (34-35).

Heinrich demands that the reader go beyond such a reduction of Marx and attempt to confront the so-called 'spectral value-objectivity' that forms the basis for commodity fetishism. To do so, though, a reader already familiar with 'Marxism' must first 'unlearn' commodity fetishism as being simply some sort of mirage, like it is wool over the eyes of the masses. It is not as if laborers are simply being duped by a false sense of reality in abiding by the apparent social relation between things, but instead they are abiding by reality *as such*; they abide not by pure falsity but what actually exists. Falsity implies that there is a delusion or distortion of what 'really' exists, but commodity fetishism, as explained by Heinrich is just as 'real' as any other aspect of the social process. Secondly, the reader must acknowledge that fetishism here is not abnormal: it is neither a peculiarity nor aberration but a direct consequence of a particular way of being. Commodity fetishism must then finally be seen as *appearance* in the most specific sense: it results from an image that is imbued, perpetuated, and practiced through the everyday consciousness of bourgeois society, and it is an image that frames the very categories of economic and political understanding under capitalist society.

Hence, qualifying value-objectivity as specifically 'spectral' denotes that what is conventionally considered objective is both 'real' and yet not necessarily apparent as such: “they are always *there*, specters,” as Derrida explains, “even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet” (1993: 221). Furthermore, the commodity, the entombment of spectral value-objectivity in capitalist society, exists as a

'thing' without phenomenon, a thing in flight that surpasses the senses (it is invisible, intangible, inaudible, and odourless); but this transcendence is not altogether spiritual, it retains that bodiless body which we have recognised as making the difference between spectre and spirit (1993: 189).

This is a quite difficult line of thought to follow, but the spectral quality of a commodity is a fundamental component of both the overarching thesis and my “method”—using the term loosely—within the first chapter. Insofar as this section asserts the transparency of frame in the problem of place, it follows a similar anchor to what above was described by Heinrich and Derrida as 'specter,' only now abstracted toward apparent metaphysical space as such. Now, I do not mean to say that the social processes under capitalism do not have serious consequences for the political representation of geographical difference. I only here make the more metaphysical—and, hence, beyond political—claim that place, in Derridian jargon, *is always* there, even if it is not represented as such, and to verify the impossibility of the articulation of its nature exceeds the political scope, whether analyzed within historical materialism or otherwise.

Despite the best efforts to define space by sense, theory, experience, or practice, space remains, to quote Hegel, “sensuous non-sensuousness and a non-sensuous sensuousness” (qt. in Miller 1970: 30). Space is, in other words, something that can be sensed insofar as it does not

possess the attribute of sensuousness, and, at the exact same time, space is something that cannot be sensed insofar as it possesses the attribute of being able to be sensed. Unlike Hegel, though, I am asserting that such a claim does nothing to better familiarize the nature of space but only highlights its impossibility. Space is not here an objective claim but always already involving the sensory experience of the subject. The dialectic is spelled out but altogether meaningless; space is truly its own self-externality, and this signifies epistemic trouble—most immediately at the metaphysical level but also necessarily at the political one—when the subject attempts to address space through the convention of place. That is, 'place' is 'space' in the truest sense: it is the sensory/non-sensory intuition of space always already through the prism of the subject.

This leads me to the conclusion that speaking of 'space' in the *ontological* sense is aporetic. To properly talk about space—or, rather, space-in-itself—one would have to come to terms with 'space' before oneself 'becomes' a subject, prior to sensibility and reasoning. I cast much doubt over whether or not this is possible since speaking of the pre-subjective, the nascent, infancy, and so on always comes from the standpoint of the subject. But even if it *was* possible to come to terms with space-in-itself, we could not translate such a characterization *as such* into language, for language is, of course, representation. Hence, when space does come to be represented, I argue that it is never intuited as space but already differentiated into places. This is because we, as living human bodies, do not intuit the absolute, the totality of space, but instead we come to terms with particular spaces which we deem to be places. To speak of absolute space is to speak of places prior to representation. Nevertheless, space is the fundamental kernel of our representations; it is the concept that we intuit and represent as places, but it is no less aporetic as a result.

My strategy for approaching place in such a way was first inspired by Heidegger's essay "The Age of the World Picture" (1977) in which he describes the "opening up" of a "sphere" as the "fundamental event in research:"

[It is] accomplished through the projection within some realm of what is—in nature, for example—of a fixed ground plan [*Grundriss*] of natural events. The projection sketches out in advance the manner in which the knowing procedure must bind itself and adhere to the sphere opened up. This binding adherence is the rigor of research. Through the projecting of the ground plan and the prescribing of rigor, procedure makes secure for itself its sphere of objects within the realm of Being (118).

Upon investigation of the extant research, the first task in this section is thus to work 'backwards' and determine the nature of this particular ground plan for 'explaining' place as an ostensibly 'real' phenomenon in the world. The first task is thus, in the precisely Heideggerian sense, to declare and solidify the image from which I sought to embark and perform research at Enright Ridge. In doing so, though, an immediate impasse is reached where place itself will appear as spectral, as something that, when turned to, vanishes into thin air. Hence the act of 'looking up' toward a *Grundriss* through review of the extant literature will ultimately prove fruitless, where what is presented below is rather a kind of critique and unsettling of framework in the very hermeneutical act of identifying it. Rather than a scientific deduction of a rigid, robust theory of place, the second chapter is only the negative confirmation of its aporetic absence.²

2 To be absolutely clear, by no means should this analysis of relevant literature stand for a rigid logical development of the theory of place which ends in bioregionalism, and neither should this review leave the reader with the conclusion of such a theory's absolute, definitive impossibility. A direct consequence of my thesis is to insist that such a gesture in either direction—place is possible or place is impossible—is erroneous if not entirely deceptive with respect to what place actually is—the problem of place is, as such and at least under the prevailing metaphysics, *unanswerable*. Moreover, the entire purpose of the initial proposal of a ground plan is to deconstruct it: to not look past it or transcend it, at least for the present moment, but to exploit and make unsettling its gaps, to first

What follows in this section should not be taken as a linear, cohesive intellectual history of all or most investigations into the problem of place. Not only has this already been accomplished with a great deal of breadth (Casey 1998); moreover, too much gravity toward that particular project would be a disservice to fully answering the primary question of this paper: that is, why, under the particular lens of bioregionalism, does an ecovillage in East Price Hill, Cincinnati exist as it does. The magnitude of such a task like Casey's work *The Fate of Place* (1998) far exceeds the scope of the present paper and its pursuit is not mine. Rather, what I hope to highlight are several previous attempts within the general category of thinking about place—of which terms, colloquially similar if not completely identical, are continuously redeployed and re-defined—that will in turn allow me to problematize the above-mentioned ground plan, that “fundamental event of research” that precedes any method or procedure. Indeed, what follows should do less to ground the reader in a stable knowledge of place than it should make him or her uncomfortable by making fully aware the lingering anxiety in place's unanswerability.

This chapter is therefore an attempt to doubt the very theoretical framework that it seeks to discover and establish. This may seem rather hopeless or nihilistic, but it must be recalled that the eventual task here is no postmodern incredulity with hands thrown up and a concession to the impossibility of knowing *anything* about place. My final gesture here (chapter four) is to appeal for a rebirth of a new metaphysics of place. The current section asserts that, without first coming to terms with the prevailing metaphysics of place and, even further, the mechanisms of power which act to sustain a particular hegemonic conception of place underneath an antagonistic and contradictory practice, theories of place and their residual impact in place-based social

come to terms with and embrace its transparent quality.

movements will be condemned to running 'in place'.

Aristotle on Place

The philosophical discussion of place for my purposes begins with Aristotle (1996). Place, for Aristotle, “takes precedence of all things” (208a35). All that follows, even change itself, assume an answer to the question of where. In Book IV of *Physics*, Aristotle subsequently attempts to define place. Importantly, this is a book divided between two main concepts: first, *topos*, or place, and second, *chronos*, or time. It is also critical to note that nowhere in *Physics* does Aristotle carry on a similar task of theorizing *choros*, or space; in fact, and in direct challenge to Plato's cosmology which speaks of space as, firstly, “total implacement” (Casey 1998: 41), it must be said that Aristotle here has no concept of space. For Aristotle, the intrinsic relation is not between time and space but time and *place*: whereas “‘motion' “in its most general and primary sense is change of place” (208a31-32), “time is 'number of movement in respect of the before and after’” (220a24-25). Both claims will be considered in depth, but suffice it to say at present that, in the single event of a body in motion, Aristotle contends that the physicist must confront both place (where the body was against where it is after movement) and time (when the body was against when it is after movement).

Discussing the latter concept of time, in typical Aristotelian fashion, Aristotle proceeds through a series of deductions of what time is not in order to end up with what time therefore must be. Firstly, he considers whether time could be thought of as a divisible thing with parts ceasing to exist and others not yet existing (218a1-10). Beyond the tumultuous nature of considering a thing that partially does not exist as existing within reality, Aristotle rules out this

concept of time even more convincingly by arguing that time, though divisible, is not in fact constitutive of sequential 'nows,' for 'now,' the presumed quantum of time existing in reality, “is not a part: a part is a measure of the whole, which must be made up of parts” (218a7-8). The 'now' is no divisible part of time, in other words, because it only ever exists in the present and, hence, is certainly no measure of the whole, for time also consists of what ceased to be and presumably what has yet to come.

Moving through other possibilities, Aristotle rules out the concept of an infinite present—that is, one and the same “now” that always exists—by insisting that time indeed can be terminated and cannot be considered as simultaneously occurring 'nows' between today and, say, 10,000 years ago. If it were, then the thing of time in reality—'now'—would exist precisely where other distinct 'nows' exist, and thus would make the conception of time as something that exists an impossibility, for if something exists, then it must be so, according to Aristotle's worldview, that it exists where and when nothing else does. In addition, Aristotle rules out time as the “sphere of whole thought” itself, for this “view is too naive for it to be worth while to consider the impossibilities implied in it” (218b7-8). Though Aristotle doesn't further specify, it may be helpful to suggest here that, if time were the sphere of the whole of thought, then, first, it would have nothing necessarily to do with motion, which Aristotle asserts it must. Second, time would be purely and dependently human, which presumes a relationship with the subject by which is both anachronistic to Aristotle, and, more critically, directly contradictory to Aristotelian thought. Such a conception of time, in other words, anticipates the notion of an idealist subject which is not yet present in Aristotle. As shall be shown, Aristotle will insist on the conception of time as involving something which we might today denote as a 'subject' if we

desire to send this concept back into the past. But by no means is it compatible to an Aristotelian worldview to say that time is purely human fancy or only contained within the whole of human thought.

Though from lines 218b1-5, Aristotle also rules out time as being the movement of the whole, the extended consideration of this theory in relation to the subject forms the basis for his argument of what time actually is. First, Aristotle argues that:

part, too, of the revolution is a time, but it certainly is not a revolution: for what is taken is part of a revolution, not a revolution. Besides, if there were more heavens than one, the movement of any of them equally would be time, so that there would be many times at the same time (218b1-5).

By “revolution,” Aristotle is referring specifically to the revolution of the heavens around the earth. When considering the human experience of time, part of any one revolution is taken as “a time,” but a revolution in total is not time. If one were to measure the movement of a whole revolution, then it would have to be admitted that there was no net change in place and, hence, no movement. Thus, the whole of movement is not time; a revolution is part of this whole of movement and yet it is not time precisely because it is not change. The heavens are a perpetual constancy, the parts of which exist in time but the whole is timeless. Aristotle does not entirely abandon this consideration, though, but instead he insists that although time is not simply movement or the whole of movement, it is also true to say that time does not exist without change: “Hence time is either movement or something that belongs to movement. Since then it is not movement, it must be the other” (219a8-9). What is now left to decipher is in what way time belongs to movement.

Drawing from his earlier deduction from time as the whole of human thought, Aristotle contends that time is something that we experience and this experience is fundamental to its nature. This leads Aristotle to the conclusion that “time is not movement but only movement in so far as it admits of enumeration” (219b2-3). Time is never subjective but instead an attribute of motion waiting to be realized. “Time is not number with which we count,” Aristotle says, “but the number of things which are counted, and this according as it occurs before or after is always different, for the 'nows' are different” (220b8-10). Number here is not a human convention but a discovered truth of the universe; we do not 'speak' time, but we realize or acknowledge it as it occurs. Time is thus for Aristotle the capacity for movement to be counted, not simply the act or ability of humans to count.

The predicament of place which precedes the above deduction of time in Book IV proves no less of a hassle. Aristotle first claims that place both exists and is something that must be distinct from bodies:

water is now, there in turn, when the water has gone out as from a vessel, air is present.

When therefore another body occupies this same place, the place is thought to be different from all the bodies which come to be in it and replace one another. What now contains air formerly contained water, so that clearly the place or space into which and out of which they passed was something different from both (208b4-8).

In addition, place should not only be considered something, but a special something that exerts influence, for the elementary natural bodies have natural places to which they will always go if uninterrupted: fire and air flow up, earth and water fall down (208b19-22). These directions are places for Aristotle, or at least elements of place, and they do not exist only in relation to us but

our sensibility changes depending on *our* own orientation which is acquired from *them*. Fire flows in the place that is up whether or not our sense of up aligns with the distinctly natural place that is up. Hence, according to Aristotle, in the first instance, place is distinguished from time as something that exists entirely naturally and *a priori*. Place's existence, in other words, does not rely on an analogous concept to that of enumeration for time; *place precedes all other things*.

But what is the nature of place? Aristotle lists four possibilities: place is either shape, matter, extension, or boundary (211b5-9). First, he reasons that it cannot be shape, for “the form [or shape] is the boundary of the thing, the place is the boundary of the body which contains it” (211b12-13). A cup, for example, may be in the shape of a cup, and thus the boundary of the thing that is the cup, but the cup itself is not its own place. The shape of the cup does not *contain* the cup, so to speak, but merely its form. In addition, the place of water is not the cup but *within* the cup: the cup is only its boundary of form. Secondly, Aristotle argues that place cannot be extension for this does not actually exist other than as a characteristic of a body. If place did exist as extension and as something beyond a characteristic of its body, “there would be infinity of places within the same thing” (211b19-21). The example Aristotle gives is that, if place is considered extension, then when water and air change place within a vessel then what lies between extremities itself would necessarily undergo change, and these too would be in other places and, hence, would require “another place which is the place of the place, and many places will be coincident” (211b24-25). Thirdly, Aristotle contends that matter cannot be place because matter “is neither separable from the thing nor contains it, whereas place has both characteristics” (212a1-2). Thus, place must be boundary, or, more precisely, “the innermost motionless boundary of what contains is place” (212a20-21). Note that place is not only

motionless, though, but the very orientation of movement, for motion, as described earlier by Aristotle, is at its most fundamental the change of place.

A peculiarity of Aristotle's thought on this point deserves some scrutiny. Recall that time, according to Aristotle, consists of the possibility of movement to be enumerated, and hence is presumably reliant on the act of counting as performed by something or someone with the capacity to count. Aristotle considers this as a logical extension to his definition of time at the end of Book IV:

But if nothing but soul, or in soul reason, is qualified to count, there would not be time unless there were soul, but only that of which time is an attribute, i.e. if *movement* can exist without soul, and the before and after are attributes of movement, and time is these *qua* numerable (223a25-29).

The existence of time is conditional to its ability to be considered as such. Time is, simply put, not only quantitative measurement but active quantitative measurement; it is movement accounted for by something or someone.

Place, though, as stated previously, does not hold a similar relationship with agency. As a boundary, place is indeed relational but not to humans: rather, it is derivative to the spatial arrangement of the cosmos itself. Aristotle explains this in terms of the directionality of places:

Hence since the light is what is naturally carried up, and the heavy is what is carried down, the boundary which contains in the direction of the middle of the universe, and the middle itself, are down, and that which contains in the direction of the outermost part of the universe, and the outermost part itself, are up (212a25-29).

This distinction is in part used to determine the 'natural' places of bodies, but it is also to

distinguish place as a thing that exists but *does not move*. Additionally, though the places of the cosmos are boundaries whose coincident bodies constitute the cosmos, this cosmos itself, or what he equates as the All or the heaven, is said not to be anywhere. According to Aristotle, for a body to be anywhere—to be in some place—necessitates other places where this body cannot be, and since the All is everywhere and nothing is outside, the All is nowhere.

Why, then, should Aristotle consider the All to exist if it does not exist anywhere? Moreover, if indeed the All does not exist, to what extent is it truly possible to say that any of its constituent parts exist? To some degree Aristotle anticipates these questions, for immediately following his investigation into the All, a body which is no place, he discusses the void, a place with no body, and contends that the void does not exist, for if it did, nothing could move (217b20-25). The void might be comfortably defeated, but the same question pertains to the All: if the All is no place, and a condition of movement is to change place, how can anything move? Internal to Book IV at least, the All contradicts existence by failing to meet the very parameters that Aristotle deduces are necessary in order for something to be considered existing. In the first few sentences of “Book IV,” Aristotle insists that “things which exist are *somewhere* (the non-existent is nowhere)...and...‘motion’ in its most general and primary sense is change of place” (208a33-35). The All does not exist anywhere in particular.

In this sense, the concept of the All inversely resembles Aristotle's initial deductions of the nature of time: whereas it is erroneous to consider time as a divisible thing with parts ceasing to be and parts not yet existing, the All does not exist in any place but is made up of parts which do. Moreover, since time is based upon movement which is itself based upon the relation of bodies changing places, it is against Aristotelian logic to attribute time to the All, for the All,

being nowhere, cannot change place and hence cannot move. Thus, the All has no sense of time and does not exist anywhere, and yet the All is what contains all things and, as where things necessarily move, is a precondition for the consideration of time.

What Aristotle means when he references the All is, specifically, space and all of its contents. Though he implicitly denounces Plato and the Timaeon story of the evolution of *choros* into *topos*, absolute space as ending in implacement, Aristotle still appeals to the All, a concept that is *space-like*. Space in this sense is merely the boundary of everything, a kind of place of all places. But what is important to note is that it is *impossible for the All to exist as such*, for to be a place according to Aristotle, again, means to be a boundary between bodies, and 'absolute space' is not by any means a boundary. In the attempt to abstract from the immediate recognition of places arranged by the cosmos, in the attempt to 'speak' for 'space' in the concept of the All, what we resort to is an impossibility.

A necessary condition of place as defined by Aristotle is that space does not exist as any sort of thing—the All is only a collection of places. If space were to exist as something in the universe, it would either be a void, a place without a body, which he contends does not exist (217b28), or a place of places, which is itself merely a larger place with larger boundaries. Hence, space as absolute or abstract cannot exist in compatibility with Aristotle's conception of place specifically because Aristotle's worldview is dependent on *relations* and not absolutes. But if absolute space does not exist, I argue, then neither can place, for place has no place to be if the All, or space, does not exist anywhere. This is our first insight into the aporia of place.

It would appear as if the 'answer' to the unsettling nature of the relationship between space and place is simply to apply a similar process as Aristotle did with time: to deny the

existence of the All as such, as something that exists, and that this is an erroneous understanding of space, where space is actually only merely the possibility of different places. If time is the before and after of movement *qua* numerable, then place should be construed as space *qua* difference. This designation would allow for two things: first, it would remove the assumed though impossible nexus of absolute space, for space *qua* difference cannot appeal to any sort of universal thing or ground, merely the difference between two places. This confirms the relative nature of an Aristotelian worldview. Secondly, space *qua* difference appeals to human convention as reflective of inert characteristics of space in the same logic as Aristotle had performed with time. Differentiation, in other words, becomes an aspect not of any subjectivist or idealist capacity to 'speak' the world, but instead space *qua* difference embarks on a preliminary sketch of the fundamental relationship between space and the subject. In the same sense that numerability is a characteristic of the world but only active insofar as it is recognized by someone who can enumerate, difference becomes an attribute of the world only apparent by someone who can differentiate. Following Aristotle, if we are to consider time to be enumeration—not the number which we count but the “number of things which are counted” (220b8-9)—then we must accordingly consider place as not simply a cosmological spatial arrangement, and neither as pure human convention, but instead as constitutive of differences within space *in itself* as recognized by humans.

But the difficulties by no means cease here, for if place is not boundary but instead difference, and if difference necessitates a being which can differentiate, then place is no more of a thing existing in the world than is time. Like enumeration, then, and staying true to Aristotelian philosophy, difference is a kind of dormant attribute of movement only awoken by human

experience, and if no soul were here to differentiate, there would be no time and no place. Having already negated eternal Time and then absolute space as not actually existing, this understanding would mean that, insofar as time and space (or place) constitute reality, *nothing* would be sans human experience. The full confrontation of this difficulty within the relation between space and human beings arrived few thousand years after Aristotle in the writings of Immanuel Kant.

Kant on Space

Kant applies a similar process to that outlined above—that of considering space in the same way Aristotle does time—directly within his early writings. The difference is that, for Kant, space *qua* difference is an intuitive basis for all *representation* by virtue of us being particular bodies. Our orientation as bodies within space—as one body among and in relation to many others, intuiting space and time by way of this difference—is fundamental to our understanding of everything. The regions of space, or places, are hence concepts represented to us by way of our senses and reasoning, mimicked by our bodies, which in turn only carry meaning because we are oriented and mutually related.

Rather than do away with the notion of absolute space, though, Kant instead asserts that space, along with time, is the fundamental *a priori* conceptual nexus to which we necessarily orient. Nevertheless, he concedes that it is a relation “which is such that it cannot itself be immediately perceived” ([1768] 1929: 25). Hence, absolute space is not “an object of an outer sensation, but a fundamental concept which first makes all such sensations possible,” and “whatsoever in the outline of a body exclusively concerns its reference to pure space, can be

apprehended only through comparison with other bodies” ([1768] 1929: 28). What Kant contends with respect to Aristotle, then, is that space cannot be considered as the All, not as Plato's 'total implacement'—for it exists as such prior to understanding. Yet space always already associates with what appears to us: regions, or places, are relational with respect to this absolute space. Hence, place now appears not as the cosmological arrangement of boundaries but indeed a differentiation which we are compelled to by virtue of us being bodies among other bodies, 'grounded,' so to speak, in the unknowable precondition of absolute space. Representations of 'our' places, 'our' regions, and, indeed, our 'cosmos', in other words, always necessarily relate to that which lies beyond: space-in-itself.

Kant was aware of this problem at the time of his dissertation in 1768. He notes in the conclusion of “On the First Ground of the Distinction of Regions in Space” that, though space can be considered “no mere fiction,” the understanding of absolute space—that which lies beyond and anterior to our representation—is unnervingly difficult if not outright impossible ([1768] 1929: 28). Kant posits that this difficulty:

arises when we attempt to philosophise on the first data of our knowledge. But it reaches its maximum when, as in this case, the consequences of an assumed concept [that of spatial relations as subsequent to and dependent on the relations of bodies to one another] contradict the most obvious experience. ([1768] 1929: 29)

This passage rather ambiguously highlights the impasse of the problem of place: though “obvious experience” eludes us to believe we are submerged in absolute space, with spatial relations apparent and real, space as we 'know' it is a coordination of our bodies in relation to others, that is, place. Conversely, place appears to us, but it is dependent on a concept which,

Kant asserts, we cannot know and hence we may expect to doubt. It is hence not that the All or some eternal Time should be rendered here as wholly senseless concepts, but rather that an investigation into their respective relationships to place and time expose an aporia within the whole nature of being. It is an aporia neglected by Aristotle simply by denying one of its two conditions, making time dependent above all on the absolute, cosmological differentiation of places, but it is an aporia recovered and revealed here by Kant. The attempt to “philosophise” on the “first data” forces us into contradiction with our immediate experience and, moreover, highlights the inadequacy in such conceptions and the unsettling limits of pure reason to distinguish what we think of as “space” or “place” from the thing-in-itself that is space.

Kant likewise contests the German idealism that had surrounded him: “The new way of ideas is undercut—or at least suspended—as recourse is taken to what had been almost entirely neglected by the subjective idealists of the previous century and a half: the living human body” (Casey 1998: 203). Now we can finally say that, with respect to Aristotle more precisely, what Kant does here is penetrate the understanding of motion as change of place, instead insisting that motion is in fact subsequent to and dependent on the appearance to us of its 'attributes:' time as enumeration and place as difference. The problem of place is an aporia between our very sense and experience of reality as living human bodies and the presumed conceptualization of it as something beyond. Place is understood as difference, but '*difference of what?*' is aporetic; it is referencing a 'what' that cannot be as such yet nevertheless is. The “what” of place, in other words, is unanswerable.

The problem of subjectivity, the body, and their relation to the 'what' is one that plagued Kant well into his career, finding itself arise again in the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

The sensible faculty of intuition is really only a receptivity for being affected in a certain way with representations, whose relation to one another is a pure intuition of space and time (pure forms of our sensibility), which, insofar as they are connected and determinable in these relations (in space and time) according to laws of the unity of experience, are called object. The non-sensible cause of these representations is entirely unknown to us, and therefore we cannot intuit it as an object; for such an object would have to be represented neither in space nor in time...Meanwhile we can call the merely intelligible cause of appearances in general the transcendental object, merely so that we may have something corresponding to sensibility as a receptivity. To this transcendental object we can ascribe the whole extent and connection of our possible perceptions, and say that it is given in itself prior to all experience. But appearances are, in accordance with it, given not in themselves but only in this experience, because they are merely representations, which signify a real object only as perceptions, namely when this perception connects up with all others in accordance with the rules of the unity of experience ([1781] 1998: 512-513).

Kant writes this introduction, it is important to recall, as a critique of both the claims of empiricists to 'know' that which truly is by way of senses and the positivists who claim to 'know' that which truly is by way of reasoning. Recall also that place, at the time of Kant's writing, was not a question mark for many. After the introduction of Cartesian space as the immediate background by which events existed at mere *locations* and not as situated in some special sense of *place*, the question of where is reduced to a matter of determining coordinates. There were at this point mainly Newtonian absolutists and Leibnizian relativists. Casey describes the scene:

By the end of the seventeenth century place has been disempowered, deprived of its own dynamism. It has become at best an inert 'part' (Newton), a mere 'modification' (Locke), of a superintendent and universal Space. And space itself, serenely void of place, retains dimensionality alone as an abiding structure of its own extensiveness. All one can do with dimensions of height, breadth, and depth is to fill and measure them, or at least to measure *with* them, that is, to determine distances between particular points in a neutral field...The grid of analytical geometry becomes the gridlock of physical space itself. Thrust into the limbo of a purely passive space regarded as impassive but not impassable, place is rendered vacuous (of) itself, freeing the field for the building of sites —themselves evacuated of any significant content (1998: 200-201).

Rather than follow either empiricism or positivism down this road, Kant contends that what we know is that which is represented to us on condition of us being living bodies. Kant makes not only an epistemological claim, but one that is simultaneously ontological. That is, in claiming and qualifying the thing-in-itself as the transcendental object, Kant ventures into a knowledge beyond what is presently knowable, speaking on precisely that which cannot be sensed or experienced. This is indeed what is at the heart of Kant's critique and which ties into the ethical problematic of the other. It is an investigation into the “thing-in-itself by a detour of the scrutiny of subjectivity. It was for this objective and nothing else that Kant elaborated the transcendental structure of subjectivity” (Karatani 2005: 34). To speak of space, for Kant, is to 'feel out' the extent of our own subjective and material bodies. In other words, space is a material circumstance of existence defined by us both being embedded, material bodies and subjects actively animating our existence as bodies. To consider both ends of this dynamic is to fully

determine, for Kant, what it “means to be bodily in a place” (Casey 1998: 241).

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What are the consequences that this Kantian transcendental structure of subjectivity has on the conception of space and place? In my Sisyphean quest to reach a theory of place, what we have so far concluded is that place is the appearance of spatial difference as it is represented to us as subjective bodies. Kant insisted that place is wholly indistinguishable from the living body: to be bodily is always to represent and animate place. Space is the transcendental object to which these representations of places necessarily relate, those within which our subjective bodies are embedded. Space is as such an unknowable and anterior occurrence—not a representable object *per se* but an *a priori* concept.

It is also important to note that, through my investigation of Kant, *place has ceased to be a thing in the universe*. Place is no longer the innermost motionless boundary of a body but instead space *qua* difference. Place is the representation of space under particular circumstances—that is, place is a representation that arrives precisely because we are different living human bodies relating to each other and other bodies. There is hence no place-in-itself; there is only space-in-itself, and space-in-itself is something which never actually appears to us as such. The confusion emerges when we see place and attribute to it, as Aristotle had, the qualities of space-in-itself. We appeal to a cosmological arrangement, to places as ingrained within the metaphysics of the universe. The confusion lingers when we claim to know space-in-itself by virtue of communicating different places, as if we can triangulate backwards to absolute space. I investigated Kant to specifically highlight the limitations of human reason as never going beyond representation, and hence to portray the theory of place as still necessarily transparent yet

aporetic: it appeals, always, to something beyond what is known—the thing-in-itself. As I shall show next, Martin Heidegger strove to collapse this transparency and thus the gap between metaphysical structure and its differentiated, representative appearances. He too, however, would fall short of this task.

Heidegger on Dwelling-in-Place

Whereas Kant makes inextricable body and place, Heidegger approaches the problem of place through a different route. As Casey describes:

Heidegger's way back to place is a middle way, a *via media* between body and mind, both of which are set aside in order to concentrate on what happens *between* them. In exploring this open between—this between of the Open—Heidegger was drawn into detours that, despite their digressive character, allowed him to glimpse aspects of place overlooked by other thinkers, ancient as well as modern (Casey 1998: 243-244).

Heidegger's understanding of space, place, and region vary vastly throughout his lifetime, and so what will only be said here is what Heidegger writes late into his life, around and after the time of the publication of his writing “Building Dwelling Thinking” (1951). With this in mind, what happens in between body and place for Heidegger at this point in his life? Dwelling. It is not so much that Kant is here contradicted but rather complicated: bodies are indeed inextricable from place, but it does not follow that the scope of place is then reduced to that of the body. The simplification of place and that of the human condition as a living body does a disservice in understanding that which makes us human but which extends beyond both our subjective mind and our objective embodiment. This is what Heidegger refers to as dwelling: the process of

living in time and place and, as it is though never directly stated, in difference.

In “Building Dwelling Thinking,” rather than place being closed or limited, Heidegger importantly draws out that, conversely, place is always already within the “space” of that which is cleared. Heidegger writes: “I am never here only, as this encapsulated body; rather, I am *there*, that is, I already pervade the room, and only thus can I go through it” (1971: 155). To think of place as simply boundary does not fully recognize the total process and possibility of place-making. The Open for Heidegger represents the possibility of place; it is only, in other words, because the Open preexists that any place is possible. Moreover, Heidegger contends that place “*cannot* be such a container” as per Aristotle “since the primary effect of place is to create room and not to enclose or delimit it. In so doing, place brings about the openness of the Open” (Casey 1998: 280). Hence, in living in place, there is not fundamentally any condition of boundedness but the exact opposite; there is always a process of clearing, of making space:

Spaces open up by the fact that they are let into the dwelling of man. To say that mortals *are* is to say that *in dwelling* they persist through spaces by virtue of their stay among things and locations...When I go toward the door of the lecture hall, I am already there, and I could not go to it at all if I were not such that I am there. The relationship between man and space is none other than dwelling, strictly thought and spoken” (Heidegger 1971: 157).

Heidegger insists here that, beyond the link between body and place is the whole relationship between man and space in the total process of what he calls dwelling. This is not to say that humans are not in addition bounded—or, rather, sheltered—with respect to their body or their dwelling but instead that the process of living in place—for Heidegger part of the whole process

of being human—is not be specified by 'being bound'. Rather, being in place is “being near”:

the closeness, the intimacy, of things as they are gathered, and themselves actively gather, *in a particular place*. To be in a place is to be near to whatever else is in that place, and preeminently the things that are co-located there. Places holding things are in turn assembled in regions, drawing right to each other in a protoaction of regionalized nearing that achieves more than mere proximity. What more? In a word: *dwelling* (Casey 1998: 281).

Dwelling for Heidegger is indicative of living in place by virtue of one's closeness to other things, by our nearness. This is, at least for later Heidegger, what it means to be human: “The way in which you are and I am, the manner in which we humans *are* on the earth, is *Buan*, dwelling. To be a human being means to be on the earth as a mortal. It means to dwell” (Heidegger 1971: 147). *Buan* connects dwelling etymologically to “building,” which to Heidegger is essentially what dwelling is. The term is deployed in two senses: first, through the physical building—of communities, cities, and roads—but also dwelling “unfolds” into the “building that cultivates growing things” (Heidegger 1971: 148).

At the same time, though, dwelling is also to preserve the fourfold of the earth, sky, mortals, and divine. The earth is the supporting ground. The sky is our spiritual referent—the beyond. Mortals are us, the inevitability of our death as part of our essential nature, and the divinities are the godhead, that by which we measure ourselves. Hence, for Heidegger:

Mortals dwell in that they receive the sky as sky...Mortals dwell in that they await the divinities as divinities...Mortals dwell in that they initiate their own nature—their being capable of death as death—into the use and practice of this capacity, so that there may be

a good death...dwelling occurs as the fourfold preservation of the fourfold (Heidegger 1971: 150-151).

Dwelling in place is at once building and receiving; it is, truly, to let be. Place is then not a matter of bounding but one at invited by the openness of the Open; the 'making room', *Gelassenheit*, that permits an Open and, thereafter, place. Near the very end of his life, Heidegger first asks the question: "Still, what is place?" and responds, "Place always opens a region in which it gathers the things into their belonging together" ([1969] 1973: 6).

This is an important break between Heidegger and the works of Kant and Aristotle. Place, for Heidegger, "gathers;" it is that-which-is-drawn-close and let to be—in sky, divine, mortal, or nature—in the process of dwelling. As Casey explains, "Region or, rather 'that-which-regions' (*Gegnet*) is that 'free expanse' (*freie Weite*) by means of which the Open lets things attain their own rest...The things sheltered in the regional Open are tantamount to the places of that Open" (Casey 1998: 283). Everything can thus be considered a place: a sculpture, a house, a backyard, even "empty space."

By specifying place and dwelling with nearness, Heidegger accomplishes a way of thinking about place that apparently does not resort to any troubling reference to its external boundaries, to the comparable alienation of place via its self-externality, or as constituted by the difference of other bodies. Indeed, Heidegger presents a way in which "the Open is not enclosed from without;" rather, the Open and thus place are able to be defined in intimate relations to themselves, in their own nearness (Casey 1998: 282). Thus, for Heidegger, the distinction between metaphysics and the individual dwelling collapses at a point of self-referential "dwelling." No longer should there be anxiety, so it seems, over the thing-in-itself, of the

parallax gap between the subjective and the objective, and, even more, of the aporia of place as space *qua* difference. Dwelling points place not toward a referent concept *out there*, beyond representation, but always *here*, in our nearness.

For further clarification, consider Heidegger's negotiation of the difference between being and Being through the concept of *Dasein*, or 'being there.' Heidegger does this with specific reference to Descartes and '*cogito ergo sum*':

“If the '*cogito sum*' is to serve as the point of departure for the existential analytic, we need not only turn it around, but we need a new ontological and phenomenal confirmation of its content. Then the first statement is “*sum*,” in the sense of I-am-in-the-world. As such a being, “I am” in the possibility of being toward various modes of behavior (*cogitationes*) as ways of being together with innerworldly beings. In contrast, Descartes says that *cogitationes* are indeed objectively present and an ego is also objectively present as a worldless *cogitans*.” ([1953] 1996: 195)

For Heidegger, the fact of 'I am' precedes our capacity to think: we first exist in the possibility of Being, and this is specifically qualified as being in the world, or the 'thrownness' of *Dasein*. At the same time, though, we are truly ways of Being first and foremost, and so, as Karatani critiques, *Dasein* is “at the same time a 'Being-with [*Mitsein*]” (Karatani 2005: 97). The transcendental ego—to which the being of all egos 'connects'—is then nothing other than Being, and *Dasein* and *Mitsein* always collapsed together *within* every possibility of *sum*.

But this is not all that is at stake in the confrontation of being. The resolve between ourselves and some transcendental concept—what's more for Heidegger, as merely an ontological resolve—does nothing to address alarming 'horizontal' difference. That is, in other

words, such an ontology cannot and in fact refuses to recognize singularity, and, as a result, difference is further obscured. As Karatani writes:

What is really commonly concealed in philosophy is not the difference between beings and Being, as Heidegger claimed, but the transcendental difference or the interstice—the very thing Heidegger himself ended up concealing by his political ontology. And so it is also that Heidegger interpreted the Kantian transcendental critique exclusively along its vertical vector, to its depth. For me, by contrast, transcendental critique should be considered and practiced—*at the same time*—along its transversal vector (Karatani 2005: 98).

To recognize singularity, one has to account for both the vertical and transversal vectors of the transcendental structure of being. Otherwise, transcendental difference, as Karatani notes, only ends up being concealed, as best exemplified in Heidegger's romanticized, “poetic” dwelling of men. What I mean by this is to say that place may very well be specified by nearness, and this may help resolve difference between being and Being by illuminating on its own terms the act of dwelling, but, as a result, nearness leaves out the capacity to understand *other places*. Place cannot be recognized as such, as singularity, but merely as the possibility of nearness. What exists outside of a place belongs to Being, but only known *in this sense* and not *as such*. This is where Kant specifically comes back to haunt us: nearness in place—to dwell by dwelling near—is only meaningful insofar as there exists that unknown which is far away. Hence, the problematic of the other still lingers, and the theory of place even in Heidegger continues to be transparent, reliant on something outside of the ontology that Heidegger puts forth. Heidegger can't account for the singularity of being, much less the singularity of place, and thus he

ultimately obscures the implicit doubt of his own concepts—Being, the Open—that Kant brings to light by his critique of pure reason and the concept of representation. This turn, however, from the body/place dynamic of Kant to the dwelling in place of Heidegger—and indeed, as shall later be noted, the underlying political ontology—will become the pivotal change in the transparent theory of place that will eventually spark bioregionalism, however indirectly. It is specifically in the capacity to 'let be' through the process of dwelling in place that will grab the attention of early bioregionalist writing, to let the fourfold preserve the fourfold, or, in other words, to ultimately let all things to rest.

Life-Place

Though Arne Næss predates the concept of bioregionalism, but he nevertheless alludes to many of its tenets in his writing. The turn toward 'letting be,' for instance, first emerges in his work “An Example of Place: Tvergastein,” in which he contemplates how “the idea of a home” delimits “an ecological self, rich in *internal* relations to what is now called environment” (2010: 45). The process of bringing back place first requires the ego to give up the position of leader, as controller over surroundings, environment, and place, and allow oneself to follow:

The main thing is that a favored place relentlessly and remorselessly determines the details of one's life. It may enrich life, but may also lead to a manifold of habits and ways of thinking that are peculiar and a source of irritation to anybody not adapted to that special life. I find that attachment to places should not be praised uncritically

(Næss 2010: 60).

It is important to note that this is, in fact, quite similar to the way of living in place that

Heidegger had specifically mentioned in his late writing. The process of living in place and building an ecosophy as espoused by Næss is what was essentially for Heidegger the practice of dwelling *poetically*, where “poetry” is defined by Heidegger as not truly of its own nature but a special kind of referrent measure-taking. Næss only flips the relationship so that man is not measuring nature but nature sizes up man—to live poetically is to let nature determine you.

In an essay entitled “...Poetically Man Dwells...,” Heidegger makes refers back to a section of a poem by Hölderlin (1984):

May, if life is sheer toil, a man
 Lift his eyes and say: so
 I too wish to be? Yes. As long as Kindness,
 The Pure, still stays with his heart, man
 Not unhappily measures himself
 Against the godhead. Is God unknown?
 Is he manifest like the sky? I'd sooner
 Believe the latter. It's the measure of man.
 Full of merit, yet poetically, man
 Dwells on this earth. But no purer
 Is the shade of the starry night,
 If I might put it so, than
 Man, who's called an image of the godhead (249-250)

The process of dwelling poetically for Heidegger is hence the capacity to measure oneself against the godhead—a god that is “unknown, and he is the measure nonetheless. Not only this,

but the god who remains unknown, must by showing *himself* as the one he is, appear as the one who remains unknown. God's *manifestness*—not only himself—is mysterious” (Heidegger 1971: 222). To dwell poetically is to live in recognition of the unknown, to submit oneself to the 'abyss' of thrownness. To measure oneself against the godhead, one must carry on the impossible task of taking in “the whole dimension in one” and making poetry with the universe (Heidegger 1971: 224).

For Næss, again in reverse, measuring oneself against the godhead is identified as the process of self-realization, by which one comes to terms with the whole ecological self—that is, the total Self transcending the individual ego—which can only be accomplished by first living in the determination of place. Whereas self-realization starts out as the singular ego, this 'reality' eventually falls to the transcendental ego of the ecological self by committing to a 'reinhabitation' of a particular place. Measuring oneself against the godhead is thus here equated as the ultimate maturity of the self; it is the point when and where place enables the ego to sublate to the transcendental ecological subject—to recognize Being, in other words.

In contradistinction to Heidegger, living in place for Næss is thus not the process of leading and actively measuring, but that of the ego-subject *following*. The result is, for later bioregionalists, a *bioregion* in which “local life” is apparently made to be “aware of itself in its natural setting” (Ryan 2012: 82). Place is, then, for the ensuing bioregionalists, identified *directly as the subject* of the ecological self, the ego being only a shallow reflection of 'true' selfhood. The place of bioregionalism is, in other words, the subject of itself, it is, as the specific term 'bioregion' attempts to make clear, “life-place” (Thayer 2003: 3). Aligned with Heidegger's sense of place, a bioregion is then intrinsically local; it is a self-realization. As Dave Foreman

(1987) wrote, “in reinhabiting a place, by dwelling in it, we become that place. We are *of* it. Our most fundamental duty is self defense. We are the wilderness defending itself” (22).

After Næss, a dramatic explosion of literature in deep ecology and, thereafter, bioregionalism, would follow, carrying within each text nearly identical concepts of 'reinhabitation,' 'place,' and 'bioregion.'³ Mimicking Heidegger, who laments that we no longer we do not dwell poetically (228), bioregionalists quickly became woeful of modern man's present placelessness. As Gary Snyder wrote in an influential 1976 essay:

“There are many people on the planet, now, who are not 'inhabitants.' Far from their home villages; removed from ancestral territories; moved into town from the farm...Re-inhabitory refers to the tiny number of persons who come out of the industrial societies...and then start to turn back to the land, to place” (1987: 28).

On a similar note, the landmark essay “Reinhabiting California” by Berg and Dasmann (1978) remarks that to reinhabit means “learning to live-in-place in an area that has been disrupted and injured through past exploitation” (217).

In nuancing our present placelessness, Aristotle comes back to haunt in the details: In the introduction to a more recent collection of bioregional essays, entitled *Bioregional Imagination*, the authors make note of that bioregionalism is the direct response to the fact that we “increasingly inhabit a global monoculture, consuming the same food, the same movies... thinking the same thoughts from Canberra to Kathmandu” (Lynch et al. 2012: 6). The All returns—we are placeless because there is no *difference*, no other places by which we can define boundaries of place. Even after many of the critiques of bioregionalism had set in—that of

3 SEE:::

lacking a component of “cultural mediation” (Gatlin 247), as “utopianism” (Pepper 2005), as “strikingly similar” to environmental determinism (Frenkel 1994: 294), and of the bioregion's sheer impossibility (Wylie 2012: 314)—there is still today the hope that “bioregional narratives” will help “‘restore the imagination’ of place, namely, to understand and to orient the evolutionary dynamics connected to the life of place, involving an open and more inclusive reflection on identity, history, and ecology” (Iovino 2012: 100).

But what, exactly, is a bioregion? What is bioregionalism? The ‘imagination of place’ means little when attempting to point your finger to the earth and identify *place*. How, in other words, do we come to “know” where we are in bioregionalism? To help define a bioregion, many bioregionalists have found it “important to recognize the influence of scientific ecology on the bioregional movement,” in the capacity to “learn the land” (Taylor 2000: 51). In fact, identification of bioregion is first and foremost through the scientific process. Bioregionalism, Sale writes, is

a way of living and thinking which views the world in terms of the actual contours and life-forms of the Earth—measured by the distinct flora and fauna, the climate and soils, the topology and hydrology, and how all these work together: regions defined by nature, not by legislation (2001: 41)

Bioregionalism is in this sense dwelling by measure-taking, directly invoking Heidegger and ignoring the humility of Næss to recognize the landscape as determining *us*. What bioregionalists—even the poets like Snyder and Sale—practice is first and foremost confirmed by a positivist science of the earth. For early bioregionalists in particular, the capacity to deploy new technologies as a way of translating supposed natural ‘meanings’ into ones that can be understood

by humans is fundamental to the process of recognizing bioregions. Even in the relatively more nuanced approach of Berg and Dasmann (1978), “the final boundaries” of a bioregion, though “best described by the people who have lived within it” are initially delimited through “climatology, physiography, animal and plant geography, natural history and other descriptive natural sciences” (218). This includes a whole host of scientific observations as they are read through political and cultural lenses, such as the value of “biological diversity,” which comes to the forefront in bioregional thought as a call for social and cultural diversity (Dobson 2007: 102-103). Strikingly, this also includes Malthusian claims of a bioregion's “carrying capacity” and “population dynamics,” and thenceforth an incessant and immutable return to the “population problem.”⁴

Still, there seems to be little so far that concretizes a bioregion, that could be thought of as a universal, exemplified definition. Though there is still no consensus to this end, much effort (Parsons 1985; Snyder 1993; Ryan 2012) has gone into likening the bioregion as, at least usually, the clearly definable watershed. In apparent resolution of the problem of defining bioregion, Ryan contends that the use of watersheds allow bioregions to become “spatially precise” while attending to cultural, environmental, and local nuances:

Bioregional boundaries are both integral to our experiences of watershed bioregions and that some environmental problems are best addressed from 'bottom to top,' that is beginning with bioregional places. Moreover, bioregional boundaries make possible porous connections to other bioregions. The borders of watersheds in fact present the possibility of caring between bioregions. Caring here begins with the local and more,

4 See Figure 5 in the Appendix.

precisely, the bioregional before encompassing the transregional or global (Ryan 2012: 98).

Either way, what appears to remain fundamental in the distinction of bioregion is the marginalization of the human subject in favor of 'recognizing' the 'natural contours' of the earth as the making of places. This is read, or taken measure, either first through the sophisticated technologies of science, which enable us to 'see' the Earth for what it really is, beyond the political realm; or, secondly, through the life-long process of actually dwelling in that place. Insofar as this has been complicated through the added dimension of the subject—in the form of consciousness or cultural dynamics which mediate and construct a bioregion (Dodge [1981] 2007)—there is nevertheless the earthly kernel of a “discovered” bioregion that always remains.

Since the early days of bioregionalism, however, there has been a spiritual revelation that contests this scientific order:

The biological-ecological sciences have been laying out (implicitly) a spiritual dimension. We must find our way to seeing the mineral cycles, the water cycles, air cycles, nutrient cycles, as sacramental—and we must incorporate that insight into our own personal spiritual quest and integrate it with all the wisdom teachings we have received from the nearer past...jeweled-net-interpenetration-ecological-systems-emptiness-consciousness tells us, no self-realization without the Whole Self, and the whole self is the whole thing (Snyder [1976] 1987: 28).

Hence, though bioregionalism reinvigorates Heidegger and the concept of dwelling in place, there is nevertheless a subtle return to the pre-Kantian problematic of Aristotle—that is, the bioregion conforms to the *a priori* spatial arrangement of the cosmos, except that today it is

identified by science. More will be said about this in the next chapter when I investigate so-called 'new cosmology,' but it should be sufficient to say now that the positivist trend in bioregionalism impedes any confrontation with the aporia of place. This is because the placement of the human living body as subject is completely ignored in bioregionalism. Obviously, bioregionalists are wholly respondent not to the earth-in-itself but to *representations*. Mapping models and spatial analysis *are not the Earth*: they are at their most fundamental an intercourse *with* the world. Positivism *denies this process as intercourse*, instead reckoning that maps are models *of* the world—not *with* the world—and that their data is the absolute translation of the information intrinsic to the Earth. The aporia of place is never confronted precisely because bioregionalists think the earth-in-itself can be discovered through hydrology and other earth sciences. From Kant, I must again here insist that the earth-in-itself does not exist like the map of the Ohio River exists, and within this differential is human convention, metaphysics, politics, power, culture, and a whole host of other factors. Though bioregionalism prides itself in having leaped past obstacles toward ecological harmony and finding the antidote to humanity's present placelessness, insofar as the aporia of place is concerned, it details nothing more than what we have already witnessed.

In fact, it is this precise problem that Heidegger encountered when he attempted to make sense of Being in light of the political representative system of Nazi Germany. As Karatani notes, [For Heidegger] truth had to be disclosed (*erschlossen*) directly by Being via a poet-thinker—the führer. In such a context, Heidegger insisted that the national referendum Hitler organized should not be an election to choose representatives—but a direct revelation (*Erschlossenheit*). But...this is another form of representation, and perhaps its

ultimate collapse: an imaginary and aesthetic synthesis of the split of the contradicting classes (Karatani 2005: 149).

In the bioregional context, the “*führer*” is first recognized as the scientist, but, within new cosmology, and as shall be shown in the next chapter, strictly positivist science is abandoned in favor of claiming reverence to the omnipotence of the Eternal spirit, Gaia, or Mother Earth. What Karatani makes clear, though, is that these are ultimately representations, attempting to “synthesize” difference through the apparent nexus of science or spirituality but inevitably ending up in their own impossibility.

Indeed, in the specifically political context of struggle, many environmentalists see themselves and their struggle as 'beyond' class or any other distinction of difference; 'we' are part of something 'bigger'—that is, saving the earth. Even former socialists like Bookchin left that kind of Marxist critique behind in the rushed judgment that such narrow-mindedness left no place for what were truly and always ecological concerns (see Bookchin 1982). The rise of so-called 'biocentrism' in environmentalist movements—directly a result of bioregionalism and deep ecology—specifically has given rise to a vain and self-inflicted misanthropy: “green thinkers implicitly embrace the dominant 'we have seen the enemy, and it is us' view that traces most environmental problems to the buying habits of consumers, the number of babies born, and the characteristics of industrialization, as if there were no class or other divisions in society” (Foster 1993:11).

For all of their vying for “socially-just human cultures” (Aberley 1999: 13), bioregionalists rarely stray far from this narrative, at least in the political sense. This is not to specifically blame them, though: what other conclusion could be reached after the massive

failure of unions to reconcile class concerns with those of race and gender in the 1960s? How could any conscientious objector to the system remain in single file as labor unions were increasingly bought, sold, and set to war against each other by the enemy? Especially when considering the scientific research fueling bioregional concerns over 'carrying capacity' and 'overpopulation,' if we are not to first stop the destruction of the planet, there will be no humans alive and able to treat each other so poorly.

It is in fact this specific disassociation with particular and directed 'class interests,' in favor of speaking for 'earth interests' or 'the interest of humanity,' to which the political struggle for place has now reached. This was the estrangement of Bookchin from fellow Marxists, but it was also the outpouring of culturalism in the far left and the pluralistic, identity politics as they have become spatialized since the 1970s. As David Harvey writes:

As the cultural mass has dropped any strong association with proletarian movements and sought to avoid a directly subservient position to capitalist culture it has become more closely identified with a cultural politics of place. Hence the outpouring of books on precisely that topic over the past 20 years...and the rise of a whole set of supportive political activities within the cultural mass for place-bound cultural movements (Harvey 1996: 325).

Politicking for place pervades not simply environmentalism but virtually all 'new social movements.' This circumscribes back-to-the-land movements, community bloc organizations, neighborhood associations, and even campaigns for municipal redistricting. Most recently, place-over-class mentality arose during Occupy Wall Street, in which the movement was virtually *nothing but* the project of taking place with no definitive or partial political standpoint.

For Harvey, the conclusion is then to get back to saying things that are not simply contingent. Rather, we must reinstate a Marxist critique that will allow us to see the logic of capital that has been at work all along. Specifically, Harvey sets aim at environmentalists as so unsophisticated with regard to the spatial configuration of capital, so ignorant of political dynamics when attempting to theorize place, as to be not much more than complicit bourgeois shills:

The best that ecologists...seem to be able to offer is either some return to an urbanization regulated by the metabolic constraints of a bioregional world as it supposedly existed in what were actually pestiferous and polluted medieval or ancient times, or a total dissolution of cities into decentralized communes or municipal entities in which, it is believed, proximity to some fictional quality called 'nature' will predispose us to lines of conscious (as opposed to enforced) action that will respect the qualities of the natural world around us...And far too much of what passes for ecologically sensitive in the fields of architecture, urban planning, and urban theory amounts to little more than a concession to trendiness and to that bourgeois aesthetics that likes to enhance the urban with a bit of green, a dash of water, and a glimpse of sky (1996: 427-428).

Harvey's claims hold much weight and clear a lot of the utopian air from the immediate bioregional dreams. After all, capitalism is undeniably at work in place-based social movements, and the aspiration of defining our lives by "natural" boundaries is quite impossible when the capacity to define what is natural is deflected by way of representation. Harvey is indeed keen of this limitation, and he adds a political economic understanding here of the introduction and processing of such representations by way of a Marxist critique.

But even in this critique, place is hardly met within any radically new sophisticated framework. Kant still lingers, and the impossibility of 'knowing' place follows precisely alongside its constant deployment as difference. Whereas Heidegger neglected to confront what Karatani calls 'transversal difference,' Harvey here recognizes and reiterates difference, but not in-itself—only as represented under structure: “A renewed capacity,” Harvey writes, “to reread the production of historical-geographical difference is a crucial preliminary step towards emancipating the possibilities for future place construction. And liberating places—materially, symbolically, and metaphorically—is an inevitable part of any progressive socio-ecological politics” (1996: 326). Difference, of course, is not resolved simply by reinstating it within Marxist geography, for it still coincides with a seriously restricting ethical problematic of the other. Nothing that has been said, or could be said, exceeds representation. How do we *know* difference if not only by representation? So far, we can't. We are still stuck at the aporia of place as constituted by the problematic of difference.

The extent of the following chapter is an elucidation of this claim through a discussion of the makings of an eco-village in East Price Hill, Cincinnati. I call this an historical geography specifically 'practicing bioregionalism.' By this I mean that those involved follow the above-mentioned ethic of 'life-place' in the attempt to resolve the political problematic of difference. They do this by following Heidegger in the process of dwelling poetically, of measuring oneself against the godhead, but also by re-imagining Aristotle in a new, intensely knowable, cosmological arrangement. In the process, they end up near what Hegel had once argued:

The universal and the unity of the principle of consciousness and of the object, and the necessity of objectivity, make their first appearance here...consciousness as consciousness

of the universal, is alone consciousness of truth; but consciousness of individuality and action as individual, an originality which becomes a singularity of content or of form, is the untrue or bad. Wickedness and error thus are constituted by isolating thought and thereby bringing about a separation from the universal. Men usually consider, when they speak of thinking something, that it must be something particular, but this is quite a delusion (Hegel 1995: 293-296).

As shall be shown, though, the true 'delusion' is that we can speak of the universal as we presently do, in lieu of the subject. An implicit commitment to such a delusion denies Enright Ridge the capacity to live-in-place. Rather, the ecovillagers, complicit to the logic of capital, nation, and state, do not 'liberate' place but only live-as-if they had. But this is no personal limitation of Enright Ridge. This stasis, this 'running-in-place' that is living-as-if, marks the limitations imposed by the aporia of place.

III. The Politics of Place

Xenophobia & Solipsism

There is no greater source of pride in living in the West Side of Cincinnati than rootedness. Though the East Side also has a deep sense of history, there is not as dependent of a sense of attachment to one's surroundings as there is on the West Side. With its white-collar influence (Prues & Heffron 2003: 250), its steady influx of newcomers in gentrified areas like Oakley, East End, or Mount Adams (see Figure 2), and its consolidated, quick commercial expansion in places like the Kenwood Towne Centre (Wakeland 2014) or Rookwood Commons (Demeropolis & Monk 2011), the East Side has always been at odds with blue-collar neighborhoods like Price Hill, Westwood, or Delhi.⁵ Through the confluence of less economic attention (see Figure 2) and forced immobility as a result of less education and wealth opportunities (La Botz 2008),⁶ West Siders have taken great stride and strength in what they can retain: history and place. They are those working-class people celebrated in common American political parlance who have the kind of knowledge of who and where they are that is cultured only by living in one place for an entire lifetime. Being a 3rd-, 4th-, or 5th- generation Price Hill resident is an immense source of pride, an empowering label that the West Sider's family weathered all of the moments of prosperity and collapse—personal, economic, or otherwise—without having being forced into the role of a Great Depression refugee or been sent packing during white flight.

Such a celebration has contributed to the political geography of Enright Ridge in two ways: firstly, through xenophobia, and, in recourse, solipsism. The former will help explain the

⁵ For reference of Cincinnati neighborhoods, see Figure 1 in the Appendix.

⁶ La Botz (2008) cites 2000 U.S. Census Data.

latter. Though the term “xenophobia” immediately carries politically derogatory connotations, I mean the word here in the more philosophical sense of fear of the '*xenos*,' what is foreign or strange. As such, it is not *simply* the precursor to racism or whatever leads to crass stereotypes but something more indicative of the human condition: 'xenophobia' here is fear of what lies outside the subject in the Kantian sense, fear of the other, of the thing-in-itself, and so on. Taking the lessons learned from the previous chapter, I argue here that fear of what lies outside is an effect of the aporia of being and should be first here considered both in a temporal and a spatial sense.

The former fear of time is a fear that temporality is inescapable yet never present as such. This has been a seemingly unshakable anxiety in the West at large. It is the stuff of poetry. To emphasize this, the melancholic realization that there were 'nows' that cease to be—and that we no longer know—can be no better exemplified in the West than in Sir Thomas Browne's *Hydriotaphia, Urn Burial*. Upon the discovery of a burial ground of Roman remains in Norfolk England in the 1600s, Browne wrote of the human condition as a perpetual, dreadful annihilation—only to be spared, he would later write in *The Garden of Cyrus*, by the glory of God (CITE). What is more critical for the present purpose, though, is the first side of the diptych, where humanity is first cast within the oblivion of time:

We whose generations are ordained in this setting part of time...are naturally constituted unto thoughts of the next world, and cannot excusably decline the consideration of that duration, which make thy pyramids pillars of snow, and all that's past a moment. There is no antidote against the opium of time, which temporarily considerith all things...But the iniquity of oblivion blindly scattereth her poppy, and deals of the memory of men without

distinction to merit of perpetuity. Who can but pity the founders of the pyramids? (1907: 138-139).

This is what I mean when I say 'xenophobia'—what is lamented here is the deep-seated anxiety that time can only truly be comprehended as *nothing but* departure, as annihilation, and if time, then, offers no steadily and knowable orientation, to where can the subject turn? Hence, xenophobia in this sense is a fear not of the outside but, more truly, of *not knowing oneself by way of that which lies outside*, hence Browne is the poet-subject who weeps because of a lack of understanding of the other, an impossibility of knowing the nature of the difference which constitutes the self. My reading of temporal xenophobia is thus Kantian in the specific way that was defended in the first chapter, as a kind of melancholic scrutiny of the embodied 'now,' which is itself permanent exodus. Temporal xenophobia is Kantian, in other words, because time is something which we are embodied by and are ourselves embodiments of—we are born; we age; we die—and yet time is a concept that exists *a priori* to our representations of it; it is constantly escaping.

Resisting xenophobically means to do one's best to keep static, to freeze the 'now' of yore and uphold it by any means necessary—politically, technologically, socially, religiously, and so on. Hence the nostalgia for that bygone era of pedestrianism in urban redevelopment projects (“Urban Commercial Overlay Overview & Best Practices” 2009); or the desire for for some future anti-industrial primitivism by way of championing the late 1800s Luddite rebellion against industrialization (Sale 1996); or through the romanticization of tribal peoples in bioregional literature, those guardians of the “Old Ways” of living peacefully with the earth (Snyder [1976] 1987); or a “new look” that recovers pagan beliefs like the “Gaia” to aid our ailing planet

(Lovelock 1979), or, on the contrary, the redemption of a battered Christian “anthropocentric” metaphysics and the illumination of its original “theocentric” intent (Simkins 2014). All instances above are efforts to convince ourselves that we haven't *really* changed, that we have only been so far confused about what we always have been.

Whatever the path taken, all tend to deny the 'present' as truly our rightful home: the age of industrialization was the process of alienation that post-industrial societies is able to both recognize and lament in parallax. Bioregionalism rests at the crux between what we as humans used to be which contributes likewise toward a fear of where we are going in every sense: technologically, economically, ecologically, ethnically, in gender roles, any change is one that forces us to lose ground. On the surface, then, it is a failure to orient oneself that compels the response of bioregionalism. But, in the more Kantian sense, what truly moves is the dread of not understanding difference, for *everything*, even ourselves, always feels different.

For new cosmology and bioregionalism, fear of what lies beyond in the spatial dimension may seem to feel a little more resolvable in the politics of place. Rather than divulge, though, into an exhausting critique and confrontation of the metaphysics of place, rather than risk speaking beyond what can possibly be spoken, place-based political life has more readily attempted to just 'stay put,' to avert one's gaze from the aporia of place and contribute full force to a more confident labyrinth, like the theology of the Earth.

But in doing so, they arrive specifically at the political strategy of solipsism. Here, I must first specifically define what I mean. As Karatani makes clear, solipsism is “*not* the idea that only I exist, but that what is true of and for me is *common to everyone*. This apparently innocuous but in fact draconian move functions as a tacit politics of internalizing the other” (2005: 73). The

'history' that 'brings back' the bygone peace which we once knew assumes this sense of a common history, eliding difference for the purpose of a comfortable narrative. Bioregionalism, I claim, is a solipsism that 'really' knows. Hence, the turn to solipsism is provoked by xenophobia in both the temporal and—as shall now be considered—the spatial sense.

Unlike the temporal condition that at minimum demands all humans traverse time and subsequently undergo change, it is completely within one's own power, or at least it appears, to simply not move. Living in the legacy of one's ancestors, in the very historical place of one's own genealogy, a comforting sense of oneself is established in the West Side of Cincinnati by staying put, particularly in spite of an industrial world that feels ever-increasingly flattened, placeless, and alienated. “Self-realization” and “reinhabitation,” following the respective advice of Næss (1973) and Berg and Dasmann (1978) but politically practiced long before either ever set pen to paper, has come by way of rootedness, by living in place for generations. The emergent sense of self in the West Side of Cincinnati, a sense that precedes Enright Ridge by generations, is conditioned by this loyalty to place—a notion, as one should recall, that has so far only meant in the distinctly political sense a practice of difference and one that lacks a broad, penetrative confrontation with the aporia of place.

Xenophobia is not just fear of the unknown but fear of the *encroaching* unknown, fear that one's sense of self via the political constitution of difference is slowly slipping away. Hence, what is important is that, predating any ecovillage aspirations, there is a feeling of rootedness in East Price Hill that is *essentially nothing more than the political geography of difference at work*, where xenophobia is resolved not by its dissolution or the poetic embracing of its inner anxiety but by its direct spatial confirmation and deployment. Bioregionalism is solipsistic in the sense

that it assumes the universality of difference and actively seeks to mediate it by staying in place and encouraging others to do so as well. The xenophobia that gives way to solipsism is hence experienced superficially as conservatism: being still, retaining the status quo. The subsequent synthesis of ecological practices did not contest this geography of difference but instead were directly enabled by it.

Contrary to much of the sympathetic literature on intentional communities and bioregional practice, this chapter seeks to explain how xenophobia and solipsism, by way of rootedness and conservatism, are the political grounds for the substantiation of Enright Ridge. I contend that these conditions illuminate the structural understanding of place. What I am attempting to highlight is the debilitating dissonance between place in idea and place in practice. What was thought to be place existing in peaceful ecological harmony, of dwellers measured against the All, against the godhead, becomes, in practice, the subjection and compliance of all to an immense, geographically settled matrix of power. Moreover, this dissonance denies the sovereignty of the ecovillagers to live-in-place and condemns them always to living-as-if. The politics of place are then constitutive of a gap in the transition from thought to praxis that leads those with good intentions to do bad things. This is indicative of the aporia of place; it is also indicative of power. Thus, the place in which the ecovillagers dwell is always political and inspired by difference (xenophobia) and 'Truth' (solipsism), compelling them to practice place in a way that resists as it simultaneously sustains power. Hence I do not claim that community members at Enright Ridge (or even the founders) are anything close to hard-line conservatives. By no means are they any more or less racist or exclusionary than others. What I am saying is that the politics of place in practice are limiting irrespective of personal or social convictions;

'good' people are still forced in 'place' to be agents in the better facilitation of biopower, of capital, of asymmetrical and undignified socio-natural relations in general. Even if everyone at Enright Ridge were vocally and adamantly race- and gender-conscious eco-anarchists, a properly accommodating practice to such a critique of the system is beyond the possibility of the present politics or metaphysics of place. These are, in fact, the two sides of the aporia of place. Thus, they live-as-if not because they desire that kind of imaginary, static living, but because, if the desire for them is to live in practice for a better world, living-as-if is truly all that exists. Any sovereign anarchistic 'place'⁷ would have to answer the aporia of place which is, at present, unanswerable.

Negotiating Difference in New Cosmology

Enright Ridge began “as a compromise,” its founder Jim Schenk writes, between him and his wife Eileen (2005:1). Native to a small rural Indiana town and desiring of an ecologically harmonious lifestyle, Jim did not initially feel at home in such a congested urban area as Cincinnati; but his wife, a woman with a family tree that extended several generations into the historical geography of Price Hill, insisted on staying put. Eileen convinced Jim with a compelling argument: “She pointed out an urban environment offered the best chance for creating a village like community because of the numbers of people there with their proximity to each other, public transportation and options for employment” (Schenk 2005:1). Contrary to convention, it appeared that an urban, highly concentrated population directly embedded within

7 “Place” at this point should be so riddled with confusion as to be rather useless in considering what might come after the aporia of place is resolved. Hence, scare-quotes are used to reference that whatever comes next will be something like that which we call place, for lack of a better term, but is by no means restricted to our so far densely aporetic understanding of such a thing.

the built environment of the city offered a prime location for promoting the kind of life Jim desired.

Moreover, and as all who have been involved with Enright Ridge would come to realize, there is a critical importance in resisting the urge to “give up” on the city, to self-ostracize and live outside on some rural commune until buried in the ground. There are still people in cities, after all, and moat-building does nothing to address what are much more penetrating issues than one's own happiness. Hence, as a reflection of both of the founders' education and experience in social work, the prefacing of Enright Ridge as a specifically urban compromise highlights that the question of what is socially just cannot be avoided when attempting to address what is environmentally just. Immediately in the agreement to live and grow roots in the city, the place of most intense social difference and indignity, there is the acknowledgment of what for Bookchin would become the central tenet of addressing a specifically *social* ecology, namely, that “the very notion of the domination of nature by man stems from the very real domination of human by human” (1982:65).

The willingness to marginalize one's own impact by avoiding this reality combined with the white, middle-class privilege inherent to rural intentional communities are means that end up sustaining the unjust conditions of both social and environmental hazards. “It is almost as if,” David Harvey writes, “a fetishistic conception of 'nature' as something to be valued and worshiped separate from human action blinds a whole political movement to the qualities of the actual living environments in which the majority of humanity will soon live” (1996:427). No, the city must not be avoided. The city is an ecosystem itself, after all—one that is wrought from humans whom are natural beings. At the outset, then, the founders of Enright Ridge did not make

the geographical mistake of marginalizing themselves to the periphery of the most apparent, daily, and direct ecological problems: pollution, consumption, and so on. Instead, ecology in East Price Hill was always intentionally urban and social, and there was indeed much careful consideration of specifically social problems even before the founders moved to Enright Avenue.

To this end, Jim initially felt little resolution to questions of the human condition, questions that no devout Catholic upbringing or priesthood aspirations seemed to mend. This was a lingering anxiety that indeed swept much of the United States in the wake of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, and the 1973 oil crisis. What should not be forgotten, though, is that this epoch was not simply a reaction of corruption, injustice, and inequality from liberals but concurrently the kind of xenophobia that has been previously outlined. Anxiety in America was felt everywhere: on the left there were new social movements, *Silent Spring*, 'back-to-the-land' movements; there were direct action movements like GreenPeace, the Animal Liberation Front, and Earth First!, but on the far right there was Ruff's *Famine and Survival in America* and the former American Nazi Kurt Saxon's tabloid monthly *The Survivor*. Indeed, it should be said that *both* paths are fundamentally xenophobic: whereas *Silent Spring* is literally a fear of the things we do not know that are currently happening and shaping our socio-natural reality and, hence, brings to doubt the self-understanding of our position as 'free' political subjects, identity politics boldly brought to center those marginal people that "we" had always used to define ourselves by virtue of their othered position, therefore leading to a crisis of not knowing how to thereafter orient oneself. Ruff's fear in *Famine and Survival in America*, after all, was not simply the consequences of rampant inflation but the totality of socio-economic collapse that would necessary follow from abandoning economic, social, and "Eternal" laws:

There can be no stability in a nation that forgets that the basic unit of society is the home, and when a significant portion of our people either lose faith in it, or violate and reject the Eternal Laws that secure the family and hold it together, then a society comes apart as its smallest unit disintegrates. We will learn this the hard way as only the tightly knit families that are emotionally, physically and spiritually prepared will survive in good condition.

You can't indefinitely violate economic laws without weakening an economic structure. You can't penalize producers and sources of capital by confiscatory taxation, and crippling, expensive, unnecessary regulation, without eventually destroying any free economic system (1978: 73).

Hence, what is truly alarming for Ruff is the encroaching unknowns of state power and family dissolution by way of abortion, straying from God, and so on. The encroaching unknown is also, it should be made clear, not just some abstract feeling: Arab oil nations quite literally affected the behavior and lifestyle of car-driving Americans in 1973 by forcing a shortage that gave way to long lines at the pump and daily restrictions of gas purchase depending on license plate number. What appeared on the left was the same sort of anxiety but one that was attempted to be resolved through more inclusive and conscious representations of the other. The first “realization” of the margin, so to speak—before the setting-in of post-structural critique—was one that not only contested common sense understandings of other people, in doing so, contested the total history and place of one's identity. Both sides, then, reflected the historical and place-specific social process of American life in the 1970s, and any subsequent reaction at any position on the political spectrum must be read as a response to the unhappiness Jim Schenk felt as he

studied in seminary school.

What distinguishes Jim, though, is that his unhappiness led neither to anarchist disavowal nor toward digging in and holding firmly to the 'laws' of economy and family; rather, his unhappiness turned first into a disillusionment with Christianity. The feeling of unhappiness became so concerning in Jim's life that he would eventually walk out of seminary school after nearly a decade and pursue a career in social work. This was a much needed broadening of perspective, and direct and immediate action undoubtedly relieved some unhappiness, but pressing questions and anxiety still persisted, particularly those that escaped the scope and gravity of on-the-ground interpersonal contact. As Jim Schenk explains,

During my years as a social worker, a question kept coming to me: 'Why, in the wealthiest nation in the world, are there still so many poor people?' And as I spent time with VISTA volunteers, fellow students, staff members and volunteers, and even with friends, I became keenly aware of a pervasive sadness and discontent that seemed to burden the lives of so many people...I began to ask the question 'Why?' and wondered about a possible connection regarding the commonality of dissatisfaction in the ranks of both the poor and the wealthy (2006:15-16).

Indeed, the closer and deeper one looks at the problem, the more difficult any answer becomes. This is especially if someone takes such a question to be deeply philosophical and spiritual. The furthest extent of practical church wisdom seemingly mirrored, after all, the literature of right-wing survivalism that was to begin emerging at this time. Take, for instance, the possible answers to suffering within Christianity: the first, that of eventual redemption in the afterlife, nevertheless leaves open the questions of what is moral and just on this earth. Moreover, if suffering is part of

the path toward salvation, why must some suffer such magnitudes more than others? The second answer, the *oikonomos*, that of equilibrium and the eternal necessity of pain as a counterpart to joy, but inequality doesn't seem to square well with this sense of economy. The third response, that of temptation and punishment, has always been a hard claim to hold when such seemingly innocent people suffer such miserable fates. It is hard to sit comfortably, for instance, with the judgment that what was most just in a tsunami was for such a broad sweep of deaths to occur. Of course, what is generally the response to such auxiliary questions is that their answers are unknowable and what is required of the faithful is *salto mortale*, that 'fatal leap' that can only be understood, *à la* Kierkegaard, as the decision of 'faith.' The question of economic disparity, of class difference, therefore remains unsettled within the responses of the church and no more conquered in mere daily action and private conversation. At the same time, all possible paths represent a kind of conscientious removal—as is the declared intent of survivalists and communes—from the lived reality of so many living things suffering. Beyond the geographical mistake of self-marginalization, then, from the outset Jim Schenk also refused to live for anything other than this world.

Thus, the entirety of *What Does God Look Like in an Expanding Universe?*, the collection of deep ecological and new cosmological essays which Jim Schenk edited and published in 2006, is about 'correcting' the real-world effects of Western Christian metaphysics. From the thoughts of Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas, Schenk argues, this particular problematic of man's separation from nature, and, moreover, the recognition of an eternal anthropocentric spirit, was embedded into Christian cosmology, and, following the reasoning above, “one of the consequences of this belief was the devaluing of the Earth and a desire to

dominate and control it. It is difficult to honor the planet or to consider respecting or preserving it as important when the afterlife is what matters; everything else is just buying time” (2006:28). The problem hence remained deeply spiritual for Jim but escaped the purview of Christian dogma. It was not in the politics, the teleological orientation, or the religious form of the church that difference could be meaningfully answered. Rather, these seemed to be the problematic effects of something more deeply penetrating, for, though not necessarily Christian, the question remained altogether “cosmological,” or, as Jim writes, a question of “understanding our place in the universe” (2006:18). To understand disparaging political and economic difference was to find anew that transcendental arrangement of people, place, and universe that had apparently always been. As Thomas Berry, a major influence on Jim Schenk, writes, what is attempting to be brought about spiritually is an “Ecological Age,” one that

takes us back to certain basic aspects of the universe which have been evident to the human mind from its earliest period but which have been further refined, observed, and scientifically stated in more recent centuries. These governing principles of the universe have controlled the entire evolutionary process from the moment of its explosive origin some fourteen billion years ago, to the shaping of the earth, the emergence of life, of consciousness...These principles that have been known in all past ages by immediate intuitive processes are now understood by scientific reasoning although their implications have not yet been acted upon in any effective way. The new age, however, the Ecological Age, must not only understand but activate these principles in a universal context if the human venture is to continue. These principles on which the universe functions are three: differentiation, subjectivity and communion (12-13).

Hence something like biodiversity, the science of which is so highly regarded in bioregionalism, comes alive in Berry as the magnificence of the union of differentiation, subjectivity, and communion, as readily identified by modern institutional science. The call for a response to such forces in the “unfolding of the earth process” is, after all, the “ultimate lesson of Physics, Biology, and all the sciences, as it is the ultimate wisdom of the Shamanic personality of tribal peoples, and the fundamental teaching of the great civilizations” (Berry 19). This differentiation in turn gives way to the subject, the “psychic being” that exists down to every individuated atom (Berry 13), and, finally, the point in understanding the first two cosmological functions is to bow one's head toward the last: communion, the whole of difference that constitutes manifold reality. The human spirit or subject is not so much reduced here from being human as it is expanded to the whole of the universe. The rather restrictive statement of “we are natural” becomes for the ecovillagers, “We are nature.” This was the response from over half of the ecovillagers interviewed in a study of Ohio Valley ecovillages by Wight: “The members of these ecologically oriented communities do not perceive a difference between the human (cultural) and the natural; in their view, we are all made from the same (spiritual and physical) elements that exist as part of the larger whole” (2008: 35). Sublation of the problem of difference, which at one and the same time is the problem of being a subject, is attempted in the process of making everything the one eternal Subject.

This is nothing more than the Christian version of the deep ecology of Næss and his concept of self-realization, where the path from establishing difference to metaphysical, holistic self is by way of seeing “'ourselves in others.' Our self-realization is hindered if the self-realization of others, with whom we identify, is hindered” (Næss 2010:82). Hence, the subject

first comes to terms with ego and adapts to an ecological self by way of orienting oneself in difference. The act of living for Næss, the process of reinhabiting place—being ecologically bounded by a mountain hut in Norway—immediately assumes and indeed is substantiated by its difference from other places and the “place-corrosive process” of modernity (Næss 2010:45). Recall again, as Snyder wrote, there is “no self-realization without the Whole Self,” and hence what is apparently truly at peril is not our own place or self specifically but the whole of the earth subject to which we as individual subjects are organically and spiritually embedded ([1976] 1987:28). The concept of personal salvation, in other words, is only made meaningful by virtue of its acknowledged and protected embeddedness within a much broader and universal cosmology.

Xenophobia—which I mean here, as one should recall from earlier, most directly as fear of not knowing *oneself* by way of difference—is confronted here, but the dreadful, encroaching unknown is seen primarily as an erroneous understanding of the human subject. Striking down Descartes, what we need to grow into is an understanding of self or subject past that of *cogito*. As Næss writes: “We underestimate ourselves. And I emphasize *selves*. We tend to confuse our 'self' with the narrow ego” (Næss 2010:81). We do not realize ourselves, in other words, but we ourselves are realized only through the whole self—the godhead, Gaia, the universe, or whatever label seems most appropriate. The entire push of all deep ecology, from Næss to Berry, is to insist that the deeply spiritual problematic of man's domination of nature fails at its initial premise; what is actually true in the most metaphysical sense is that we live embedded and in communion with an intrinsically valuable whole. Domination over nature is a kind of illusion exacerbated by differences that are purely political and by no means 'true.' Thus, in the ideology

that would go on to form the basis of all that has been done on Enright Avenue, the question of difference is resolved in the specific undoing of the political and exaltation of cosmological difference. Enright Ridge thus reflects the spatio-spiritual practice of deep ecology. It is the willingness to live rooted in place, irrespective of political difference aligned with the communal differences of a vast, sentient, ordered universe—the one eternal Subject.

The problem, of course, is as it has always been in making such a cosmological or dogmatic claim: *who* gets to determine what constitutes this one eternal Subject and with what mandate? First, the 'who' is us—but not just any 'us;' instead it is those who are in such a political, economic, and social condition as to be able to initially embrace and “realize” this all-encompassing, eternal Spirit. The 'we' are those who have the splendid opportunity to live simply, to be an ecovillager, and to unearth the hidden secrets of long-forgotten pagan rituals. Thus, in the attempt to resolve the problem of difference by transcending the human subject, we end up precisely where we began: in the unfortunate confrontation with the specifically human limits to our subjective understanding of that which lies beyond. At no moment in deep ecological thought is there any going beyond representation into something more transcendent. The entirety of deep ecology, bioregionalism, and environmentalism at large is not in discovering the truth of the universe but merely in determining 'better' ways to 'speak for' it.

By spiritually binding oneself to the whole and not merely different beings, otherness falls away: everything becomes merely an extension of ourselves. This is not a case of “speaking for” anyone or anything but direct revelation of Truth and Self of which our personal ego is only at best marginal. New cosmology is in this sense nothing more than a new dogma, where 'ritualists' become prophets not of an Abrahamic God but of the Holy Truth of Nature. Hence,

when Abram suggests at the Second North American Bioregional Conference in 1986 to include non-human representatives at the next congress in order to make sure their “voices” can be heard, this is not seen as a seriously problematic projection of human thoughts onto animals but rather as the next logical step in better verifying the consensual Truth of the one Eternal spirit (Taylor 2000:57). Recall the Wittgenstein adage: “If a lion could talk, we could not understand him” (Wittgenstein [1953] 2009 :223). Not only do the new cosmologists insist that the lion is talking but, indeed, that we *can* understand him. What better way, in other words, to communicate with the other sentients of this world than bringing to NABC III the “Council of All Beings” and performing the prescribed rituals that allow us and animals alike to meet in deep ethereal connection (Taylor 2000:57)?

To the frustration of all those at the NABC II, though, the conscious denial of anthropocentrism does nothing but further confirm it. This is because anthropocentrism, however unfortunately, is an inescapable limitation of our capacity to know. Certainly, there remains the capacity to self-marginalize, to recognize ourselves as embedded in something far more whole, but insofar as we claim speech of this whole, we are acting only in human representation—the whole *as it appears to us*. Hence, it is not so much that the subject becomes 'beyond human' in such a mystified process as including animals at the round table but rather the exact opposite: by virtue of such 'rituals,' we now claim subjective authority over how non-human animals are thinking in ways that were before left completely unknown. It is unavoidable that all things *of necessity* pass through representation by this newly ecologically-conscious human subject, for, if we are truly honest with ourselves, it is *always* us writing the statements. The lion only 'speaks' to us, for instance, precisely because we have represented it as a thing that speaks. To claim

something beyond this is to claim a knowledge beyond representation. As a result, the attempt to remove an anthropocentric or empirical cosmology—e.g. science—does the opposite: nature, in effect, becomes even more human by virtue of us claiming access to the deeply ontological knowledge that lies beyond. This anthropomorphization of nature is heard, for instance, in the environmentalist motto of “Save the Earth!,” forgetting that the earth as such is not even what is known to us; all we merely have are but representations of it. In this sense, new cosmology merely reiterates the “fundamental event of the modern age” Heidegger described as “the conquest of the world as picture” (1977: 134).

In the initial new cosmological invocation brought to bear on Enright Avenue, there are immediate political consequences that can be brought to light with reference to the *Prison Notebooks*. While remarking on religion, Gramsci makes a note addressing what he describes as the “fetish” of the collective organism:

A collective organism is comprised of single individuals who form the organism in so far as they are given and actively accept a hierarchy and a particular leadership. If each one of the single members considers the collective organism to be a body extraneous to themselves, it is obvious that this organism no longer exists in reality but becomes a phantom of the intellect, a fetish...Individuals expect the organism to act, even if they do nothing and do not reflect that, since their attitude is widespread, the organism is of necessity inoperative...single individuals (seeing that, despite their non-intervention, something nonetheless happens) are led to think that in actual fact there exists above them a phantom entity, the abstraction of the collective organism, a species of autonomous divinity that thinks, not with the head of a specific being, yet nevertheless thinks, that

moves, not with the real legs of a person, yet still moves, and so on (1999: 124-125, Q15§13).

The introduction of a new collective organism in the form of a transcendental spirit is characteristic of the matrix of power by which people have long since been relating to each other. In the wake of all of the social and economic change occurring in the 1970s, in the lament of what appeared to be nothing but disorientation, xenophobia led to the emergence of new cosmology, deep ecology, and bioregionalism as various flavors of some atavistic metanarrative that predated industrialization, Christianity, or even the human condition. Thus, it was the search for a beyond or supra-human subject—'moving like a human, thinking like a human'—organizing and valorizing the universe.

Politically speaking, the fetish of the collective organism forms the necessary basis of power; it is the initial grounding of the hegemony apparatus. This is an often-confused term that requires further clarity. The non-Gramscian sense of 'cultural hegemony' as a kind of discursive catchall for any coercive effect on anyone anywhere is not what is meant in the *Prison Notebooks*. Rather, what Gramsci is trying to explain through the concept of hegemony is moral and intellectual leadership as a condition of the political. In other words, the question which hegemony answers is how does leadership come to be and why do others submit, usually willingly, to this leadership. Hegemony was a way for Gramsci to understand how dramatic political, social, and economic difference, which seemingly should define different interests at the level of the individual, coagulate into one and the same political reality. The collective organism is both spectral and objective; it is a fetish that is 'not real' but made real by virtue of its embeddness in human thought and activity. As Gramsci writes, "The realisation of a hegemonic

apparatus, in so far as it creates a new ideological terrain, determines a reform of consciousness and of methods of knowledge: it is a fact of knowledge, a philosophical fact” (1999: 690). Hegemony in Gramsci's sense is the process by which bourgeois values become the 'common sense' values for the entire society.

Bringing Gramsci to bear on new cosmology, then, I conclude that new cosmology does not 'break' hegemony but in fact further reifies relations of power in two fundamental ways. First, through the direct reproduction of the so-called collective organism. In the effort to identify every constituent particle of the universe as being its own subject, and, even more, in the assertion that all of these being one and the same subject, what is accomplished is nothing more than the anthropomorphization of nature. It is not that subjecthood is extended to nature but rather that *our own* subjecthood now claims within its scope that of properly 'understanding' nature, animals, and the Eternal spirit as a whole. There is no shift of “our consciousness from an anthropocentric view to an Earth-centered view of life” as desired by Enright Ridge but instead merely an anthropogenic image which claims to self-marginalize and represent the earth at center (Reidel 2008:57). Further, the attempt to do away with the politics of difference, so rightly lamented by Jim Schenk in his early life before arriving to Enright Avenue, leads again to their further cosmological legitimation. What seems to be forgotten is that the political claim of difference is always substantiated ontologically, and ontological claims of difference are indeed always represented politically. To address either, one must address both, but to do this, one must approach difference in general, or, more precisely, within the total prevailing metaphysics.

Secondly, and what will require further explanation in the coming sections, is that Enright Ridge is itself an effect of power, as are its inhabitants. This was brought about as deep ecology

and new cosmology—ideologies that, despite their lack of revolutionary potential, contest hegemony—were attempted to be put into practice via bioregionalism. What can be identified in the geography of Enright Ridge however, but power settled geographically. There is a disconnect, in other words, between the ideology of bioregionalism—antagonistic to the politico-economic territorialization of Nation-State-Capital—and to what eventually comes to be practiced as bioregionalism: namely, a self-marginalized community living not in-place but only as-if. Thus, beyond the initial clarification of Enright Ridge's reification of power by way of “new cosmology,” this second characteristic of the ecovillage will allow me to say something much more meaningful about the overall nature of power as it has settled within the geography of Enright Avenue.

Imago I: Seminary Square

In 1978, after having received a Master's of Social Work at Case Western University and settling down for a few years in Price Hill, Jim and his wife Eileen founded a nonprofit educational organization dubbed the Imago Earth Center. Reflecting the cosmological principles recently reached by the two, “our idea [with Imago],” Jim Schenk says, “was to look at how we would live if we held the Earth and its people as sacred” (2005:1). At the beginning, it was largely an environmental education center that distributed information to local residents and schools about sustainability and the local ecosystem. Eventually, though, the Earth Center began offering an open space for events and demonstrations both connected with and traveling through the locality. In doing so, the center has seen a large audience over the years from permaculture workshops, spiritual gatherings, sustainability talks, and other related congregations. In

particular, the EarthSpirit Rising conference, starting in 1998, has featured prominent speakers Thomas Berry, Brian Swimme, Miriam MacGillis, John Seed, David Abram, and many other well-known personalities of deep ecology, permaculture, and bioregional gatherings (Schenk 2006:18). Subsequently, the Earth Center became the basis for ecological organizing in East Price Hill, and the people involved have been some of the largest contributors in the struggle for ecological place-making within the neighborhood over the past 40 years.

Though established directly on Enright Avenue, Imago's location sits back several hundred yards from the street.⁸ It is quite difficult to even see the center from the road, especially when trees are in full bloom. As a result of its obscured vision, though, Imago helps anchor aesthetically and geographically the Hundred-Acre Woods, a forested area in between Enright and McPherson Avenue. Not only does this aid in connecting the backyards of Enright Avenue to a green space with hiking trails, natural vegetation, and wild animals, but it also breaks down the urban-natural barrier in the re-presentation of specifically socio-natural space. Thus, the very first instance of intentionally imagining place in ecological equilibrium was built into the construction of the Imago Earth Center nearly 30 years prior to the founding of Enright Ridge.⁹

There was a feeling within the community that more could be done to live harmoniously with the Earth, and in 1993, 15 residents of Price Hill working under the banner of Imago decided to try and build ecological practices into the community more directly—by actively

⁸ See Figure 2 in the Appendix.

⁹ This, however, is a double-edged sword that helps foreshadow the coming critique. Though it was voluntary and indeed aligned with the eco-philosophy of Jim and Eileen to organize the Earth Center in such a way, the effect of such an arrangement geographically is essentially spatial marginalization. It can hardly be said that the Earth Center “takes place” and has since anchored East Price Hill or even Enright Avenue into a bioregion. Instead, bioregional practice seems to be only realizable through its marginalized practice, e.g. through the emergence of Imago well-offsite of the commercial Warsaw Avenue, tucked away from view of the public and hence from central, urban focus. What appears in 1978 is therefore a quite uncomfortable analogy to the kind of “back-to-the-land” self-marginalization that was running amok in the '70s, only here never realized as such.

building a more holistic and communal lifestyle (Schenk 2005:1-2). An early concern was the “blightedness” of the surrounding neighborhood, in which 11 percent of the study area had fallen to vacancy, and 68 percent was renter-occupied (Loezir 2011: 89). It was quite difficult to obtain money to realize such a project, and, what's more, the specific flavor of “eco-development” was a hard sell to the president of the East Price Hill Community Council who favored high-end commercial expansion as a means of turning the neighborhood around (Sizemore 2004: 43). Despite these initial setbacks, though, in 1998 “a grant opportunity presented to all city neighborhoods through the 'Community Investment Partners' of the Greater Cincinnati Foundation provided a great opportunity for Imago to realize their dream of the eco-village” (Sizemore 2004: 42). Beyond the Greater Cincinnati Foundation, it is important to note, the grant was funded in cooperation with the United Way private industry partners the Procter & Gamble Fund and Fifth Third Bank (Sizemore 2004: 58). A partnership of non-profit organizations led by Imago applied for the grant and they were awarded the amount of \$100,000 each year for 5 years until 2003.

Upon receiving this grant, Imago presented a consolidated redevelopment plan to the public. They recruited a class of graduate students at the College of Design, Art, Architecture, and Planning (DAAP) of the University of Cincinnati to aid in this project, and the “Seminary Square Eco-Village Work Plan” was subsequently developed (University of Cincinnati 1999). This plan called for the founding of an 'eco-village' that claimed an approximately 50 block area located right in the center of East Price Hill.¹⁰ As the plan reads,

“East Price Hill is facing challenges typical of urban neighborhoods. There are many

¹⁰ See Figure 3 in the Appendix.

negative perceptions of Price Hill neighborhoods surrounding trash, deteriorating housing stock, a faltering business district, and traffic. Fortunately, collaborations involving social and civic organizations are working to resolve these perceptions. This plan attempts to address some of those issues through the inclusion of a mixture of various strategies to facilitate the transformation of Seminary Square into an urban Eco-Village by focusing on design, housing policy initiatives and community based programming (University of Cincinnati 1999: v).

The central focus for the plan concerned the problem of housing. Such a task was to be accomplished first through the improvement of existing housing and housing policy by reducing energy consumption, rehabilitation of vacant or dilapidated buildings, and then a heavy-handed encouragement of home ownership. As the work plan explains, “there tends to be a connection between home ownership and a sense of concern with the future of the area in which a person lives” (University of Cincinnati 1999: 3). The plan further mentions that, out of the 1589 housing units in Seminary Square in 2000, nearly 32% are owner occupied with this percentage decreasing every year (University of Cincinnati 1999: 3). There is an acknowledgment that home ownership is not always an option, but no further “alternatives” are thereafter mentioned, and the project simply only echoes the general complaint of East Price Hill homeowners in response to the influx of renters in the neighborhood.

Home ownership remains one of the biggest points of contention in East Price Hill today. In East Price Hill, home ownership continues to drop faster than the city's overall rate, with owner occupied homes in 2012 making up only 36 percent of the homes (Horn 2012). Many rentals have become subsidized housing for the poor, which is often blamed for deteriorating

quality, but neighborhood advocates also lay blame on landlords for not taking proper care of their property (Horn 2012). One such property managed by a landlord in East Price Hill was described by a local resident as a “slaughterhouse” with respect to its management, property damage, bed bug infestations, and ceiling leaks (Tweh 2014). Many also see the amount of attention being paid to newly gentrified neighboring areas like Over-the-Rhine or Downtown and feel as if they are receiving no assistance from the city. “I believe there are communities in Cincinnati that are throwaways. They are neglected...Price Hill is one of them,” a local woman was quoted as saying (Horn 2012).

The dynamic relationship between these bordering neighborhoods is further noted as a reason for the decline in home ownership. One local report argues:

With the clearance of public housing from the West End in the late 1990s and English Woods a few years later, and the government-supported redevelopment of Over-the-Rhine since the mid-2000s, some people in these near-West Side neighborhoods say they fear their community is becoming Cincinnati's new ghetto (Curnutte 2013).

Poor, transient renters, social services, and subsidized housing all moved in to East Price Hill and brought the bad water with them. Hence, the correlation between homeownership and crime appears as quite obvious and natural: Coolidge (2015) notes that, though in Cincinnati crime is going down—with one of the most dramatic changes coming from the newly gentrified Over-the-Rhine—violent crime in East Price Hill increased from 14 reported incidents in 2011 to 25 last year. East Price also had 10 homicides in 2012, more than any other city neighborhood (Curnutte 2013).

This is reflected in the more personal news coverage of the degrading quality of East

Price Hill. BieryGolick (2014), for instance, describes the police raid of a “brothel” in East Price Hill in late 2014 which led to two men being charged with promoting prostitution and drug possession. Another police raid on Warsaw Avenue in 2014 led to the arrest of 14 suspected gang members and drug dealers (Thompson 2014). In the local media, East Price Hill has become a 'problem area'—the kind of place that Over-the-Rhine used to be. As Peter Witte, a former member of the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority, was quoted as saying: “At the end of the day, the affordable housing is our blessing and our curse” (Curnutte 2013).

In such discursive descriptions, what isn't undertaken, though, is the more difficult task of deeply and systemically explaining why affordable housing appears to us so necessary yet carrying with it such apparent problems. Moreover, how such transience and dilapidation came to characterize East Price Hill is only bluntly recognized, the extent of which is: 'bad people were there, and now they are here.' As consisting of many of the city's first suburbs, the West Side of Cincinnati has been embedded over the past century in the history of blockbusting, segregated housing plans, and deindustrialization in American cities that requires no extensive explanation here, but there are some important aspects that remain particularly pertinent to Imago's aspirations of building an ecologically sustainable village and will help explain the broader politics of development in which East Price Hill had necessarily been embedded.

Immediately past the train tracks to the east of East Price Hill, before reaching Over-the-Rhine, is a neighborhood called West End.¹¹ In the 1910-1940 period, black migration to Cincinnati concentrated here. By 1940 this one neighborhood had absorbed 64 percent of Cincinnati's entire black population (Casey-Leininger 1993: 233-235). Though there was

¹¹ See Figure 1 in the Appendix.

considerable class heterogeneity among the residents, the neighborhood remained racially homogeneous. Segregated housing schemes and the racialized inequality has left West End seriously neglected and deteriorated. Though housing redevelopment was attempted prior to World War II, it was only after the war, and in accordance with the Cincinnati metropolitan master plan of 1948 (Casey-Leininger 1993: 240), that a consolidated effort to clear blightedness was brought onto the neighborhood. This was to be accomplished not through housing redevelopment, though, but more as a means of clearing out the criminal element by building a highway straight through a major residential portion of West End.

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There is a specific analysis which I will introduce here that will be used recurrently throughout the rest of this chapter. It heavily relies on the work of the Japanese Marxist Kojin Karatani and his project in *The Structure of World History* to reinterpret history not as a history of modes of production—as 'conventional Marxism' would have it—but rather one of modes of exchange. Karatani defends this shift by reasoning that, insofar as one only deals with material processes, one will “never find the moral moment” (Karatani 2014: xix). Karatani brings back the problematic of difference and argues that the realization of freedom is not first a matter of production but one fundamentally of intercourse with the other. Karatani draws specifically from Kant and reasons that morality is not a determination of good and evil but one of realizing freedom, specifically by always treating the “other as an end” and not a means to an end (Karatani 2014: xix). Thus, freedom is a fundamentally moral question embedded within the relationship between the self and the other. Karatani's Marxism re-orientes the question of economy in terms of exchange.

Karatani produces a schematic, a kind of structure of world history on the basis of four modes of exchange. The first, mode of exchange A, is that of gift-reciprocity. This is the mode of the “archaic societies in the gift-countergift reciprocal system, under which various items are given and reciprocated, including food, property, women, land, service, labor, and rituals” (Karatani 2014: 5). This, however, is not something ancient and far away but a mode of exchange still present. In the modern social formation, mode of exchange A takes the form of the nation—the 'imagined' community that, for example, gifts citizenship in exchange for allegiance. Mode of exchange B is plunder and redistribution. When one community simply plunders another, this is not an exchange, but, as Karatani remarks, “If a community wants to engage in continuous plunder, the dominant community cannot simply carry out acts of plunder but must also give something to its targets” (Karatani 2014: 6). The community does this namely in the form of public works and protection. Hence, in the modern social formation, this takes the form of the state. The third mode of exchange, C, is capital. For Karatani, this is a mode grounded in mutual consent. Rather than the coercion of mode of exchange A or the violence implicated in mode of exchange B, mode of exchange C operates “only when the participants mutually recognize each other as free beings” (Karatani 2014: 6). Hence, all of wage labor, commerce, and the 'free' market in general indeed appear to us as 'free.' The fourth mode of exchange, D, is thought of by Karatani as somewhat of a return of mode of exchange A

in a higher dimension. It is a mode of exchange that is simultaneously free and mutual.

Unlike the other three modes, mode of exchange D does not exist in actuality. It is the imaginary return of the moment of reciprocity that has been repressed under modes of exchange B and C. Accordingly, it originally appeared in the form of religious

movements (Karatani 2014: 7).

There is much more to be said about Karatani's model, but the important point to draw out here is that modes of exchange A, B, and C remain intertwined, in their respective modern social formations; the whole of capitalist modernity forms a Borromean knot, “linked in such a manner that all will fall apart if any of the three is missing” (Karatani 2014: xiv). Likewise they are mutually reinforcing so that, for instance, in the the communist revolutions of the 20th-century, capital class relations were upended only to the dramatic overreach of nation and state. Privation fell only for the implicit unfreedom of Capital-Nation-State to reveal itself in the gulags, state-sponsored capitalism, and the fetish of the proletarian dictatorship.

Hence, as in the case of West End, if unemployment is high, if a neighborhood is blighted, another pole of Capital-Nation-State will seek to re-calibrate the knot. We see urban black displacement in Cincinnati as most directly an instance of mode of exchange B, plunder and redistribution, and as a correction for the problems grounded in mode of exchange C, or, more directly here, capitalist class relations. Economically impoverished areas are no help to capitalist accumulation, and their correction is an important project for the whole Borromean knot of Capital-Nation-State. Hence, the uprooting of black residents, the plunder of their 'place,' is simultaneously paired with its redistribution into public infrastructure, which in turn will help better facilitate capital flow in the city by virtue of improved, faster transportation; and, of course, this will help foster and perpetuate the American dream in the '50s of a nuclear family with a white picket fence in the peaceful suburbs and easy access to a day job in the city, which is itself a way to re-arrange capital investment geographically and renew the process of accumulation in rural areas—which, as a result of technological dynamism, has seen diminishing

returns in recent years—by developing farmland and turning it into suburbs, and the cycle of Capital-Nation-State.

Prior to construction, the predominately black population was to be compensated from imminent domain through assured alternate housing built by the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA). The relocation of black residents to new public housing had proven quite difficult, though, as area white residents, in typical NIMBY fashion, pressured the Housing Authority to constantly move public housing elsewhere. What little had been completed by the CMHA in 1955, on the eve of the construction of the expressway, had rapidly been filled by displaced black residents. Consequently, private builders ended up producing “most of the new construction in the metropolitan area,” and these largely consisted of “single-family houses at prices well above the means of people living in the basin slums” (Casey-Leininger 1993: 241). White residents, too, had been cleared from the area of that would be the new highway network: “the Planning Commission proposed to start the program in African American tracts in the West End, after which it intended to send bulldozers to Over-the-Rhine, the predominantly white” neighborhood just to the east (Miller & Tucker 1998: 37). Generally, however, whites were able to afford the housing opportunities of the private industry, and, in addition, even for blacks with adequate income, “discrimination confined most black home buyers to areas in which houses were forty or more years old,” homes which “carried higher down payments, shorter mortgage periods, and higher maintenance requirements that tended to force the monthly shelter costs to levels as high or higher than those for whites in the same income bracket” (Casey-Leininger 1993: 247).

Consequently, there was a massive housing shortage in Cincinnati through the mid-1950s

that was quite racialized, and this was exacerbated by the plans of private sector housing fully intending to sustain racial segregation. This was accomplished mainly through the relocation and concentration of the transient black population of West End to multi-family rental housing in parts of Avondale. This link was no mere coincidence but was indeed directly and openly racial: Several housing projects in Avondale were subsidized specifically to those people “displaced from urban renewal sites” (Casey-Leininger 1993: 242). The effect was that the black community remained segregated, restricted to the same housing arrangements of poor quality. The city encouraged this philosophy:

Important city officials defended segregated housing and thus presumably favored channeling black relocatees to black or changing neighborhoods...in 1959 the head of Cincinnati's Department of Urban Development, the local agency in charge of urban renewal, in a statement to the press, defended placing segregated black relocation housing in Avondale and in other black or changing areas. And in 1961 the chief of the city's housing bureau, in his annual report to the city manager, spelled out how whites might defend their neighborhoods from blacks seeking housing there (Casey-Leininger 1993: 242).

In 1950, Avondale was 86 percent white (Curnutte 2012). Ten years later, in 1960, 56 percent of Avondale's population was black—representing both the movement of displaced blacks coming from West End in addition to an increase of 30,500 to Cincinnati's black population in the 1950s—and almost all were concentrated to what would become a large contiguous ghetto in Avondale (Casey-Leininger 1993: 243). From 1940 to 1970, West End's total population fell from 62,363 to 17,068, and its black population fell from 37,369 to 16,509 (Casey-Leininger 1993: 233). The

problem of poverty remained, now shared between the highly-concentrated ghettos of West and and the ghetto in Avondale which would later absorb Walnut Hills and Corryville by 1970 (Miller & Tucker 1998: 48). Over-the-Rhine, between West End and Avondale, was championed by its poor white population as a kind of Appalachian enclave that preserved itself against the black ghettos to the west and east. This narrative collapsed in by the 1970s, as Over-the-Rhine became the central hub of Cincinnati's new black ghetto. In 1960, 30,000, mostly white Appalachian residents lived in Over-the-Rhine in 1960, but by 1990, there were only 9,752 people living there, and 6,875 (71 percent) were black (Miller & Tucker 1998: xix).

In sum, a capitalist geography of difference continually reproduces a place that is both poor and black. Racialized poverty in the urban built environment is a ghost which follows the black relocatee wherever he or she sets root. Housing segregation and discrimination were the rules by which black residents of Cincinnati were forced to play throughout the middle of the 20th-century (Casey-Leininger 1993: 248). The state has not fought poverty directly but rather displaced it—clearing blightedness by dropping in its place a highway system. Engels describes this exact same process in *The Housing Question* and defines it as 'Hausmann'—the method by which the bourgeois city planners split working class quarters for the public good and thereby move inequality somewhere else. Whether the specific concern is of aesthetics, health, or infrastructure, city planners move in and 'redevelop' blighted areas, but in the hope of relieving the criminal element or the undesirables at large, the result is always the same: 'problem areas' are never resolved but simply relocated:

The infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely *shifted elsewhere*! The same

economic necessity that produced them in the first place, produces them in the next place also. As long as the capitalist mode of production continues to exist, it is folly to hope for an isolated solution of the housing question or of any other social question affecting the fate of the workers (Engels [1887] 2000: 77).

The 'economic necessity' to which Engels is referring is the process of capital accumulation. This is to say that the circulation of capital—defined as $M-C-M'$ —is by definition spiraling accumulation, and we can see this play out not merely in the relative economic disparity between people but indeed it manifests in the very spatial reproduction of any capitalist society. Economic growth is hence as much a relative part of capital accumulation as is the inevitable and measly compensation of impoverished laborers, the geography of economic inequality, the reserve army population of the floating proletariat, and so on. Blightedness is hence not something that can be fixed within a geography subordinate to the logic of capital, but instead it is a fundamental aspect of this capitalist geography.

What we directly witness, though—and what appears on the surface as we read the media reports of brothels, crime, and transience—is the *appearance* of the political economy of development and not this material process. That is, the sphere of our contact is one of discursive exchange, one that carries presuppositions of a wholly different character than what seemingly defines production. Marx indeed makes direct note of this in *Capital*, calling this appearance the very “Eden of the innate rights of man. There alone rule Freedom, Equality, Property and Bentham” (Marx [1867] 1992: 121). Thus, what compels our categories of understanding under a predominantly capitalist mode of exchange is a particular appearance of the world as inherently free and equal, as one's value and individuality being one's own—e.g. liberal democracy—and

these are the bourgeois beliefs under which capitalism operates, accepted and willingly practiced by the proletariat. Unlike the gift exchange which necessitates coerced reciprocity or plunder which necessitates the state's 'social contract' and a monopoly on violence, the capitalist mode of exchange, as Karatani rightly notes, operates on this mutual consent, but only such, I add, that it is *apparent* (2014: 14). What I mean by this is to say that mutual content occurs in the realm of appearance, that of exchange, but it does not occur in production, where workers are frequently coerced to work longer hours for less compensation, particularly in industrializing countries. Many wage laborers do not give consent *per se* but are forced into these roles by virtue of their total social, economic, and cultural position as a means of producing and reproducing themselves, their labor-power, and their families.

Underlying this appearance, the perpetually running process of identifying and making universal the values of the leader is what Gramsci means when he refers to cultural hegemony. It is important to note that this does not mean that these values constitute anything like a 'false' ideology or mirage. Rather, they constitute spectral objectivity. It is a “subjective” universality that is felt, thought, and practiced; indeed, the reproduction of consciousness is part and parcel of the very real process by which capitalism sustains itself. It may be said that people are duped into “believing” in a free world when they are in reality completely unfree, but whether or not this is generally true, it is besides the point. It is more relevant to say that freedom itself exists as a binding ephemeral reality that, like the specter of place or commodity, both is and is not there. Freedom is necessitated by the same process, capitalism, which definitively denies its capacity to exist. What is unique about capitalist society is that the wage laborer toils on the condition that he appears to be 'free' to do so, free to quit or work somewhere else. Yet, in another sense, the

wage laborer is a wage laborer precisely because he or she is *not* free—the proletariat are required to be such or else they will not be able to survive. They are no longer free to own the means of production—their own labor-power included—but are in fact freed *from* these means.

We must also realize that the Enlightenment, as the 'spirit,' so to speak, of capitalism, was also the harbinger of a degree of injustice, intolerance, and unfreedom on a scale the world had never before seen—precisely, again, as a result of the universalization of the Enlightened subject as he attempted to represent the colonized other and bring backwards people toward civilization, toward freedom. The gap between these two poles—between Enlightenment liberalism on the one hand and serious material misery on the other—is the vacuum in which power assumes itself. It is this difference that allows freedom to also assume the dynamics of domination via the apparatus of empire.

Racism introduces itself here as a technique of power, one related to what Karatani calls mode of exchange A: gift-reciprocity. Whereas the state is the embodiment of plunder and redistribution, the nation for Karatani appears as gift-reciprocity. As Karatani investigates tribal, pre-capitalist, and pre-state society, he notices that underlying the appearance of gift in tribal society was the always-apparent compulsion toward reciprocity. A 'gift' in this sense was not as purely one-sided as its name implies, but rather a full mode of exchange, the purpose of which is often to gain a kind of power over others specifically through this relation. Hence, the potlatch of some indigineous tribes of North America is not a pure gift but rather a full economy where “recipients attempt to overpower their rivals by giving back even more than they have received. Potlatch is not itself warfare, but resembles warfare in that the motive behind it is to gain supremacy over one's rivals” (Karatani 2014: 12). As what is embodied by the modern day

nation, though, this form of exchange embeds itself much deeper into the structure of society than its appearance in seemingly unrelated tribal economies:

There are also cases of gift giving that seem not to follow this tendency. For example, membership in a community is something bestowed as a gift as soon as one is born. Each member bears an obligation to reciprocate for this. The force by which the community constrains each of its members is the force of this sort of reciprocity. For this reason, with the community there is no particular need to impose penalties in cases where a member violates the norms (rules). Once it is known to the community at large that a member has violated the norms that is the end: to be abandoned by the community is equivalent to death (Karatani 2014: 12).

Difference appears as inevitable, and how much threshold there is in the violation of norms is arbitrary, determined by hegemony. Even more, 'violating the norms' assumes an agency over one's actions that is not always possible—despite our compulsion to assume innately the concept of freedom—in light of what appears to be structural inequality. If home ownership or rootedness is a norm of the community, for instance, what if such a norm apparently evades any material possibility not given one's agency but simply one's socio-spatial position? What if, moreover, its possibility is superseded by the state through imminent domain as in the case of West End?

In the case of the history of home ownership in Cincinnati, racism is then a kind of suture between our understanding of freedom and equality in exchange, the reproduction of 'nation' in the form of community, and an inherently unfree and unjust mode of production. Racism attempts to explain the correlation between urban black residents, transience, and the ghetto. A way to reconcile their plight in a city like Cincinnati and the reality of disproportionately high

crime and poverty in black communities is to say that it is something inherent to them as others—as beyond the norms of the imagined community—and not internal to that capitalist society which appears as free, equal, just, and so on. Hence, an overt racist would then say that black people, by a some specific quality of their otherness, create ghettos and therefore ruin property value, homeownership, the common good, etc.

Today, this is an unspeakable sentiment, but it nevertheless remains buried within the modern social formation. Racism is no longer identified with “blackness” as such but with the indirect, disproportionate qualities of being black in urban America: namely, for my purposes here, transience and non-home ownership. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, the West End in 2000 was 80% African American, 45% of households were below poverty, and the median family income was \$17,487 (Maloney & Auffrey 2004). Thus, when one pairs the “clearance of public housing from the West End in the late 1990s” with the rise of crime and decline of home ownership in East Price Hill, it is important to make clear the long, racialized history of transience in Cincinnati that led to the clearing out of West End (Curnutte 2013). The question of why being black and being transient have been correlated never breaches the surface. As an example, in response to two shootings in Price Hill—all involved were black—on the same block over a single weekend in 2004, East Price Hill Improvement Association President Frank Hollister said, “I think it's deplorable what has happened around here...Basically, when they closed the West End we got overrun with those people and they brought drugs, violence and prostitution with them” (qt. in Hansel 2004). “Those people,” those others, are never seen embedded within a system and always seen as others, as personally embodying the problems of urban neighborhoods. Racism is a way of reconciling 'those people' and the apparent suffering of

their lot with the freedom and equality of which we take to be the fabric of American society. It is never considered whether being an nomadic undesirable indeed rests upon the structure of Capital-Nation-State, or whether blightedness is indeed a condition of power settled within a geography of difference.

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Returning now to the ecovillage project of Imago, in order to bandage with the recent wound of transience, the plan calls for the establishment of the Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center, in which information on housing would be disseminated, rehabilitation services would be offered, and the Seminary Square and “Eco-Village theme” were to be showcased and marketed (University of Cincinnati 1999:17). Hence, the promotion of sustainability practices, greening rehabilitation projects, and the like would be consolidated within this Eco-Housing Center which can push the “Eco-Village theme” that “will create a ripple effect that encourages business development and create a neighborhood jobs, which in turn can boost and stabilize the economic vitality and community stability” (University of Cincinnati 1999:20).

As this plan was presented, City of Cincinnati Planning Division were finishing a business district renewal plan for Warsaw Avenue, the commercial street that cut directly through the middle of Seminary Square (Sizemore 2004:59).¹² Jim Schenk had met with the planners and expressed his interest to include the eco-village concept alongside what the state had planned for business renewal, but his ideas were ignored: “The eco-village plan was taken to the planning commission, acknowledged for its existence and idea, but was not officially adopted” (Sizemore 2004:59). Moreover, the Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority had proposed a low-income,

¹² See Figure 3 in the Appendix.

multi-family, rental development project that directly contested the heart of the housing ethic espoused by the “Seminary Square Eco-Village Work Plan” (1999). Though the city's proposal never came to fruition, the irrelevance of their work plan to state officials nevertheless struck a psychological blow to the desires of Community Partners and Imago in establishing an eco-village, as their efforts seemed to go against the grain of commercial and private land development.

In 2000, half-way through the 5-year CIP grant, Community Partners reassessed the Seminary Square Eco-Village and ultimately decided that it was no longer financially feasible nor penetrated deeply enough to the core issues of this urban neighborhood. The influx of black residents into the community had not gone unnoticed, and it appeared as if the eco-village did not resonate with this growing population. Thus, in late 2000, Community Partners decided that “with the remaining money, it was time to hire an outside planning consultant to help develop a strategic plan for all of Price Hill, including the Seminary Square Eco-village. Among their greatest concerns was to address the need of engaging the new poor black residents” (Sizemore 2004:61). This would eventually lead into the formation of a coalition called Price Hill Will that initiated a series of interviews from 2001-2002 of Price Hill residents, collaborating with local churches, block groups, and schools to get a better understanding of the kinds of improvements that the community wanted to see for itself. (Table 1 in the Appendix is the consolidated effort of Price Hill Will to respond to the community's needs.)

Despite the involvement of the local community, the two most visible and appreciated efforts that the organization has had on Price Hill have been the Buy-Improve-Sell rehabilitation program and the revitalization of the so-called business area known as the “Incline District”

(“Price Hill Plan” 2014). Hence, what becomes most apparent and appreciated in a predominantly capitalist mode of exchange are capitalist class relations. At the same time, this does indeed carry with it the underlying pursuits of nation and state. First, the City of Cincinnati support of the Plan acts here on behalf of the state, in addition to the Planning & Buildings Department, Trade & Development Department, and the Department of Transport & Engineering representing key funding resources for the projects in Price Hill (“Price Hill Plan” 2014). On behalf of the exchange relations which constitute the nation, Price Hill Will and constituent organizations like Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, BLOC, and other community councils are active in producing the gift of community in exchange for residents' support and perpetuation of the fight for home ownership—to the exclusion of those transient renters. These are enacted and intimated on what remains a predominantly capitalist society, where money situates state and nation, but all are inextricably linked.

The predominance of capitalist class relations has come full bloom most recently in Price Hill with the dramatic investment and reshaping of the Incline District. In a sleek work plan presented in 2014 by the Economics Center of the Lindner College of Business of the University of Cincinnati, and in partnership with Urban Land Institute Cincinnati, the project of the “Price Hill Incline District” declared:

Cincinnati's Price Hill Incline District is named for the historic Price Hill Incline transportation system, which carried passengers from Eighth Street 350 feet up the slope of the steep hill. Built in 1874, it brought thousands of new residents to the neighborhood, many of them German or Irish. Olden View Park marks the top of the Incline, which was operated until 1943. The Price Hill Incline District Market Area exemplifies the trend of

residential, commercial and civic investment and development in urban neighborhoods after decades of shifts in population outside of the urban core. Neighborhoods that are rich in infrastructure, historic resources, arts and culture, community engagement and leadership can overcome past disinvestment and thrive—by providing an environment that is updated to reflect modern attitudes regarding healthy and vibrant urban places (Economics Center 2014).

This is the full Capitalist-Nation-State swing of gentrification. Within what became of the initial “Seminary Square Work Plan” (1999) was the total coalescing of a state-sponsored urban redevelopment program, capital investment, and the revitalization of 'community' norms of home ownership through Buy-Improve-Sell. The Price Hill Incline District is a gentrification project that dedicates its namesake to a defunct and all but forgotten Incline during a time when Price Hill was far less transient and wasn't nearly as racially heterogeneous as it is today. Recalling from the earlier remarks on xenophobia and solipsism, nothing seems to be clearer of the present anxiety over placelessness—in addition to the historical reproduction of a community—than the nostalgic preservation of a bygone Incline. A nod toward the Price Hill Incline is temporal and spatial xenophobia; it is a digging in of one's heels and a mimic of the rootedness of the entire West Side of Cincinnati.

In March 2015, one year after the introduction of the Price Hill Incline District Market Area by the Economics Center, Price Hill Will was awarded a \$500,000 grant from Wells Fargo to acquire homes, rehab them, and put more homeowners into Price Hill (Backscheider 2015). One should recall what Jim Schenk said about the nature of Seminary Square in its early tentative days: “It's isn't about gentrification...it's about stopping the blight” (Vaccariello

2000:59). Yet there is no such thing as removing blight under capitalism, only displacing it, and East Price Hill was an accumulation of transience and slums embedded within a long historical geography of ghettos in Cincinnati at the time when Seminary Square was first envisioned. From the vantage point of the subject living in East Price Hill, blight can be stopped and can disappear, but it merely becomes a problem for that other *over there* rather than *here*. Xenophobia, fear of the encroaching unknown, is thus resolved solely through solipsism, both politically and spatially. At the present moment, it is difficult to tell where the next blighted area will emerge; but, rest assured, it will emerge, for the conditions that produce poverty continue to act in full force. Even more, though, what becomes clear in the eventual turnout of the ecovillage aspirations of Seminary Square is that it was, after all, quite plainly the rearrangement of a political geography of difference through the mechanism of gentrification.

Imago II: Enright Ridge

The “Seminary Square Eco-Village Work Plan” (1999) was eventually translated via Capital-Nation-State from an ecologically sustainable 'life-place' to gentrification. What was in thought an inclusive and holistic community lifestyle by way of living-in-place became in practice subordinate and indeed compliant with an exclusionary political geography of difference, in which capital, people, and 'nature' are all distributed. In light of this, the philosophy of place has so far remained space *qua* difference, clearly defined within political, economic, and social boundaries. And yet, we must here again remember that such a philosophy is unsettling: this representation is in fact indicative of the aporia and the spectral quality of place, always already implying space as a thing-in-itself which lies beyond representation. Any philosophy that

has so far claimed a knowledge beyond or before representation has turned out to be solipsistic in Karatani's sense, and the politics of place as a result never transcends the problematic of difference. 'Speaking for' nature is not liberating, in other words, but brought about via exclusion, namely, of the transient and the urban poor. It is the task of this final section to sketch out a political ontology of place that counters the modern social formation of Capital-Nation-State, one that comes to terms with difference not as the in-between mechanism of space and place mediated by power—hence *not* with an appeal to absolute space or to 'bioregion'—but one that comes to be as a transcendent response to how place is actually experienced. What if, in other words, instead of place defined *a priori* to be space *qua* difference, place is seen as *purely* actual, lived difference, with no extension into those concepts like 'space' or 'new cosmology' that lie beyond what is knowable?

Despite all of the setbacks, the Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage (ERUEV) was founded three years after Price Hill Will was formed, and a second attempt to practice life-place in East Price Hill was thus initiated. In this second attempt, by virtue of the practice of bioregionalism imbricated as it is within Enright Ridge's geography, is not 'bioregion' but *pure* difference. In other words, Enright Ridge is a clear example of what Wylie calls the 'ecotone': “rather than being a mosaic of putatively independent and exclusionary units, any biotic environment is effectively *all* edge-effect: ecotones or fuzzy boundaries 'all the way down'” (2012: 31). Enright Ridge represents precisely this dynamic edge. To respond to the aporia of place, what is needed to understand ontically is neither that resistance *should* dwell in place or that we are presently placeless but rather that living in resistance *as such* always lies on the boundary between the two—in pure, relative spatial difference.

A dominant bioregionalism would correct the positivist subject by marginalizing him or her in context with the sentient life-place, and, even more, against the cosmological arrangement of the godhead. The first instance of 'we are Nature,' after all, is to say that 'we are natural,' and this is perhaps the most penetrating critique against the externalization of nature present in positivist objectivity. A dominant positivism, on the other hand, would correct the mystification of bioregionalism and its faulty quest to 'speak for' nature. "We are not merely Nature," the positivist would argue, "we are distinct if nothing else than by virtue of our capacity to reason." Positivism would rightly critique the strategy of bioregionalism as anthropomorphizing the earth, as extending our claims not to scientific objectivity but to religious and subjective ends. The parallax between, however, would be to at one and the same time marginalize the human subject without resorting to any new dogma to stand in its place.

I propose a transversal, comparative analysis between Seminary Square and an ecologically sustainable lifestyle in East Price Hill. On the one hand, there is the social formation of Capital-Nation-State and its embodiment within the development of Price Hill Will and the Price Hill Incline District; on the other, there is the actual existence of the Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage: an intentional community that seemingly works against this structure simply by virtue of its striving for sustainability. To see what lies beyond the appearance, however, one must heed the parallax between the two attempts. Living-in-place, as it had been thought and dreamed in Seminary Square, is not what occurs at Enright Ridge but rather a kind of living that does not actually exist as such. This is what I have come to call *living-as-if*. What I mean by this is that ecovillagers do not live in bioregional 'life-place' here on Enright Avenue or anywhere else. Instead, I argue, ecovillagers only ever live-as-if: they live via representations of difference,

purely on the marginal boundary, and, in fact, this is the only possibility of place-bound resistance today. In this spectral living, what is able to be discerned and explicitly defined is then that the *limits* of the kind of place-claiming that had been hoped for in Seminary Square reduce resistance always to a status of as-if.

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In 2004, the Eco-neighborhood Action Team was planned by Price Hill Will in order to try and save the concept of the Seminary Square Eco-Village, but this was to no avail. Seminary Square as an eco-village project—and, more importantly, as a place-claiming for the sake of ecological harmony—had failed. Today, there is no Seminary Square Eco-Village, no talk of its work plan, and no Seminary Square Eco-Housing Center. In its aftermath, Schenk summarized four fundamental reasons for the project's failure. First, the project began in the most deteriorated area of Price Hill, and so the costs of development were more than expected. This is also what had been observed in the midterm reassessment. Second, there was a huge influx of “relatively transient renters into the neighborhood at this time,” something that was indeed identified by the initial work plan but never seemed to be settled (Schenk 2005:2). Third, Jim argued that the 50-block area was larger than they were able to manage, and, lastly, there was not enough interest and commitment by residents in the area (Schenk 2005:2).

Founding an ecovillage directly on Enright Avenue, the location of the Imago Earth Center, would occur to Jim Schenk in 2004 after the Eco-neighborhood Action Team had not met its goal. As opposed to Seminary Square, there seemed a potential in Enright Avenue to transcend the aforementioned shortcomings. For instance, though Enright Ridge would consist of both ecovillagers and non-members down the long cul-de-sac, the total population is far smaller.

As a result, financing and pulling together a community would be much less daunting. Secondly, most of the residents were already homeowners, and so they would not face the kind of deterioration that occurred due to rentals and landlords. Thirdly, though there are foreclosures and vacancies on the street, Enright Avenue is tucked away from the commercial district¹³ and interspersed with forestry connecting the backyards, thus considerably less blighted and far less of an overhaul than was needed in redeveloping the entirety of Warsaw Avenue. For these reasons, the Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage could manage to do, it appeared, what Seminary Square could not.

In 2004, Enright Ridge initially began putting in practice on Enright Avenue the same strategy that had predominantly made up the work for Seminary Square and Price Hill Will: buying up foreclosed homes, retrofitting them for energy efficiency, and selling them back on the market, only now with the added, non-mandatory invitation of membership into a new urban ecovillage. While this practice remains one of the most significant activities of Enright Ridge, this is not what has made it into an urban intentional community. To encourage this kind of growth, the ecovillage has held near-weekly potlucks and other community events, continues to organize workshops and seminars geared toward permaculture and green energy, and has pursued communal sustainability projects such as digging wells for geothermal energy and installing solar panels. In 2005, Enright Ridge also started a community newsletter, entitled *The Ridge Runner*, which details local happenings around the community, updates members on particular projects, includes a few creative writing pieces, and advertises upcoming events and workshops. Since the ecovillage's initial formation in 2004, members have also added quite a bit of formal

13 See Figure 4 in the Appendix.

structure to the organization of the community. As of 2015, Enright Ridge has a full board of committees, including the Enright Green Group Task Force (EGG), the Membership Committee, the Farm Project, the Housing Committee, the Communications Committee (“Enright Ridge Urban Ecovillage” 2015).

Perhaps most significantly, though, in 2009, Enright Ridge founded a community-supported agriculture (CSA) program. “The ERUEV has been working for years to create a sustainable city neighborhood,” profess Schenk and local resident Julie Hotchkiss in the introduction of a guide they made for urban CSAs, “and the urban farm project is part of the vision” (2013:1). Headquartered at a former florist's greenhouse near the ecovillage, the CSA has been built as a work co-op where members pay a fee and agree to work 40 hours over the course of a 26-week season from May to October. In return, they receive a weekly share for 25 weeks including a variety of produce like greens, herbs, corn, eggplant, potatoes, peppers, and broccoli. Since its founding in 2009, the Enright Ridge CSA continues to grow in land and shares every year (Schenk & Hotchkiss 2013).

Initially, the farmland had entirely consisted of volunteered backyards down Enright Avenue, but it has since expanded to include several other plots. One of is an acre of land in nearby Saylor Park. More significantly, though, the CSA has also expanded into public land. The Cincinnati Metropolitan Housing Authority had reclaimed property where dilapidated housing was razed in East Price Hill, and Enright Ridge has been granted permission to include this multi-acre plot into the CSA project (Schenk & Hotchkiss 2013). The flourishing of community gardens and urban farms was something that the City had been encouraging as early as 2009, when the Urban Agriculture Program, initiated by the Cincinnati Health Department, was

founded in order to convert vacant City-owned property like that existing in Price Hill into community-based gardens (“Urban Agriculture in Cincinnati Quality of Life Committee Meeting” 2011:2).

It seems only natural, then, that the City would welcome the work of Enright Ridge into 'beautifying' the neighborhood and fighting for urban food justice. In fact, since the formation of the Enright Ridge CSA, the City has only further emphasized the importance of urban agriculture, citing its many benefits including food security, good health, increasing green space in the City, neighborhood safety, “empowerment,” job production, “neighborhood enrichment,” and saving “the city money” as “city properties in agricultural use do not have to be maintained at the city's expense” (“Urban Agriculture in Cincinnati Quality of Life Committee Meeting” 2011:1-2). In 2011, Lauren Niemes of the Nutrition Council addressed the Cincinnati City Council Health, Environment and Education Committee and stressed the importance of the continued increase of urban farms and community gardens:

I encourage the City of Cincinnati to support through policies and leadership the expansion of community gardens in Cincinnati including neighborhood and school gardens. Urban agriculture (growing food for profit) has the potential to link environmental, social justice, economic development, youth development and public health strategies to improve the quality of life for our most vulnerable urban populations—people living on limited incomes, without a car and at high risk for chronic diseases (“Urban Agriculture in Cincinnati Quality of Life Committee Meeting” 2011:3-4).

The City has shown quite a bit of support to this program, expanding its presence in urban agriculture to six publicly-owned community gardens around Cincinnati in addition to the

aforementioned program that grows gardens into vacant city landholdings. At the level of the politics of development in Cincinnati, the Enright Ridge CSA aligns with the City's vision for community gardening and urban agriculture because it costs the city less to maintain its own land and because it provides a better image of Cincinnati on all scales and discourses as a progressive, 'green' city. Cincinnati advertises a livable city amid a consumptive, polluted, and post-industrial West and hence to increase the City's tax base and economic growth.

In order to view Enright Ridge critically, a similar analysis as had been performed with Seminary Square is again in need of articulation here. Whereas Seminary Square gentrified a neighborhood under a capitalist geography, the appearances of Enright Ridge and the CSA are different. Enright Ridge has not made the same kind of compromises to larger forces of capital, nation, or state and neither has it spurred the same kind of economic investment. There are several subversive elements to which Enright Ridge can take credit. First, it still retains the ecologically-oriented community lifestyle and aesthetic as Seminary Square had hoped to accomplish. Second, Enright Ridge is indeed actively localizing food production, absolving the division between producer and consumer, increasingly pushing for net-neutral energy independence, and claiming this all within the place and politics of a locally-determined ecovillage. All of this rubs against the path of humanity toward environmental crises by encouraging personal action, localization, less consumption, and so on.

Changing the culture through these sorts of practices is the conscious intention here, as an Enright Ridge ecovillager had once written:

We can no longer deny the environmental crisis. While issues such as global warming and rapid species extinction are being accepted as real by science and state, they are but

symptoms of the created disease that lies within the web of our culture. In a time when humans have depleted many of the Earth's resources and changed the nature of nature herself, the only thing we can do to begin healing from our mistakes is to begin thinking ecologically (Reidel 2008:55).

My purpose is to see whether or not 'thinking ecologically' at the local scale and changing 'culture' will eventually arrive somewhere past the present environmental crisis. Enright Ridgers certainly think ecologically, but to what extent are the present ecological practices resolving crises that have so far seemed intrinsic to the modern and global social formation of Capital-Nation-State?

Firstly, there is an immense problem of spatial and temporal scale at play. Similar to judging climate solely by specific weather events, it is very hard to tell whether or not such microscopic practices within such a short time-frame are making a difference to what are incredibly global and centuries-long crises that humanity faces. The present understanding in Enright Ridge, though, is that localization is the direction to take and indeed the antidote to the illness of our time. This conclusion is arrived at, one should recall, in the same gesture of bioregionalism, where restoring “membership in a community is one essential prerequisite to bioregional living” (McGinnis 2000: 84). Upon her investigation of Enright Ridge, Loezir (2011) similarly notes that the fix of environmental justice is destined to be within a “small scaled area where people spend most of their time. By experiencing environmental issues in practice, people can recognize and understand them, taking charge for natural resources maintenance and pride for the visibility of their actions” (114). It is hence visibility and contact that is key to bring conflicts, responsibility, and power down to the level of community. This, however, always leads

to the question: what is truly made 'visible' by virtue of our local actions?

There is a very apparent reality in Enright Ridge of a community building toward harmonious and sustainable lifestyles. At the level of the individual and of the locale, this occurs, and no one on the outside could falsify that image for the ecovillager living there. In contradistinction to this, though, is the fact that places like Enright Ridge are never simply 'of their own' and do not necessarily appear identical at any point on the vertical or horizontal scale. They are always already constituted by and constitutive of other places both smaller (the family and the individual) and larger (the city) in scope, in addition to being represented by and representing different places transpositionally—how the ecovillage sees itself against my writing about the ecovillage from a library in Columbus, Ohio, for instance. This complex geography, in a nutshell, is the problematic of difference in the spatial sense as I have tried to describe. To say something substantive with respect to this is always to speak relatively. Hence, as we saw before, what appeared as a clearing of blightedness in the West End could be seen as such only insofar as the larger geographic process of displacement was ignored. Likewise, what appears here as ecological sustainability might only be as such insofar as the broader spatial relations of capital, nation, and state are again ignored. Harvey recognizes precisely this point in what he calls the “myths” of the new urban. One such myth is that

community solidarity (often 'local') can provide the stability and power needed to control, manage, and alleviate urban problems and that 'community' can substitute for public politics. Opposed to this is the recognition that 'community,' insofar as it exists, is an unstable configuration relative to the conflictual processes that generate, sustain, and eventually undermine it, and that insofar as it does acquire permanence it is frequently an

exclusionary and oppressive social form that can be as much at the root of urban conflict and urban degeneration as it can be a panacea for political-economic difficulties (1996: 437).

How such local communities are “exclusionary and oppressive” can sometimes be quite difficult to discern and must be situated in broader relations. Recall that Schenk (2006) cited an influx of transient renters as one of the reasons for the demise of Seminary Square. At the level of the local, all that appears is the incoming of poor, the expansion of blightedness, and the decline of home ownership, none of which effectively reveal the long history and wide geography of ghettos, displacement, and the compulsion toward rent in Cincinnati. What is not seen internal to Schenk's (2006) comments and neither can be discerned from immediate direct investigation within the locality is a schematic for the conditions within the urban process that compelled the ecovillagers onto the tucked away Enright Avenue; neither is there any way to reason why ghettos have been so concentrated in East Price Hill in the first place; and neither, resoundingly, is there any attempt to understand that arrangement of social relations that demands transience in a particular section of society and why this necessitates their incompatibility with an urban ecovillage. It is to these questions that I now return, and it is only in light of these broader relations that Enright Ridge can be considered exclusive.

Confronted with the apparent, local reality of a particular spatial arrangement in the failure of Seminary Square, there is a bioregional praxis that emerges and necessitates both rootedness and localization as primary means for taking place. Specifically, the assumptions within defining transient renters and the largeness of 50 blocks demands a conformity to, first, the bioregional motto of “Don't Move!” (Snyder 2007: 98) and, second, a condemnation of living

beyond one's immanent, day-to-day, and socio-natural relationships. Moreover, it is important to note, these explanations sketch out a particular identification of not simply what an ecovillage can or can't be to the exclusion of other places but also *who* can be its compatible practitioners to the exclusion of othered subjects—50 blocks is too big for a sense of community, and embodiment as a transient person is incompatible with being an ecovillager. Thus, the question of place-taking compels a question of the proper subject of that place.

Enright Ridge sought to address this by reducing the scale of the ecovillage and take root in a place already characterized with home ownership. This came at the cost, though, of a positive claim of identity. In the so-called “eco-refuge,” as Verstraeten and Verstraeten (2011) call places like Enright Ridge, this is unavoidable:

The Eco-refuges [are] faced to a complex of problems to overrule: how to guarantee freedom despite the organization of the refuge in order to establish social justice? How can the refuge be sustainable and at the same time create wellness for all? What about the cross-cultural dialogue inside refuges and what about external relation with the world without?...Though the participants can belong to very different cultural traditions, the common Eco-refuge has to produce a collective identity so that any participant feels home and every participant can identify the Eco-refuge as the constancy of place with the prime basis of sameness (786).

This sameness, however, promotes an otherness and the underlying problem of difference remains. The positive identity of an ecovillager as homeowner is only meaningful when put in relation to the exclusion of the renter as outsider. The condition of sameness occurs precisely because the others existing outside make sense of it; the upholding of one representation of

living is sensible only insofar as it can be differentiated from other representations of living. If the eventual intent of all of the places like Enright Ridge, then, is to introduce ecological sustainability the world over, this dependency on substantive difference does not bode well to its possibility.

Even more so, if we orient ourselves not within the ecovillage but within the global structure of hegemony, how does the ecovillage appear? In one word: marginal. This is, in fact, the only possibility of this place-bound resistance. Now, it is not as if ecovillagers will be stopped in broad daylight by any brute force of state violence—indeed they might very well continue to be encouraged by governmental offices. Still, if they try to take place as they conventionally have imagined, they will confront something like the diffuse effects of power that Schenk (2006) had identified in the failure of Seminary Square: transient renters, bigness and concentration of dilapidated urban areas, and so on. But what is being faulted is secondary to the primary impossibility of the initial Seminary Square Eco-Village: that is, Seminary Square failed not because of bigness or transience, but because *power settled geographically forbids its own spatial rearrangement into bioregional places*.

To be an ecovillager, in other words, necessitates a marginalization of oneself from the center, a marginalization that penetrates through from one's own worldview all the way down to the actual bioregional practices. We had already seen this take place in the formation of new cosmology—we can also see it in the desire for 'simple living'—this also appears to occur in practice. The geography of Enright Ridge is deeply fragmented, situated between a forest and a cemetery on a long, dead-end street with no commercial industry, no thoroughfare, and no rental property. Wrapped in bioregional imaginations, in the dismantling of Seminary Square, they

were confronted with 'knowing their place' in compulsive, systematic relationships. The ecovillagers were forced to seek out the geographical margins of East Price Hill, to find refuge in a fragmented collective of houses tucked away from view on Enright Avenue. Marginalism here thus means that ecovillagers own property, pay taxes, work city jobs, and are wholly compliant to the modern city and the forces of nation, state, and capital that permeate.

Moreover, the fact that their identity is relational also means that they are not simply what upholds Enright Ridge. The ethic of loyalty to place, as Taylor notes, insists that we “behave in a way consistent with an affirmation of the intrinsic value of all life forms, an ethics grounded in a felt connection to all life, especially as it is manifested in the places we live” (2000: 67). The sustainability of the ecovillage stems from its capacity to arrange itself spatially among those on a street who feel no such ethic: as an internal study revealed, 1/3 of those living on Enright Avenue are members, 1/3 are supportive, and 1/3 are entirely indifferent (Faherty 2014). In addition, a number of people in the CSA are simply local residents offering their land and not members of Enright Ridge or participants in the work-share co-op. By virtue of an overarching structure of power that compelled ecovillagers in East Price Hill to the margins, to be living in a milieu of placelessness, among non-committal others, is a condition of the possibility to live-as-if-in-place on Enright Avenue. They are living-as-if to the exclusion of those outside of this imagined community. This is the new reproduction of nation in Karatani's sense—the gift of which is citizenship, reciprocated in the upholding of the norms of a particular and positive, but always relational, identity.

Moreover, as I stated earlier, 'bioregion' as a kind of place is something we never actually confront. What we are actually contesting in the practice of bioregionalism, as Wylie made clear,

is always the dynamic margins:

Even in relatively isolatable 'systems,' what we all now take as a truism—that ecology *is* dynamism—any distinctiveness, stasis, or 'balance' ever attained or discerned is necessarily temporary, contingent, and relative. The turbulence of the littoral only makes unavoidably obvious what holds for all the natural world (2012: 314).

The bioregion as exclusionary unit is still necessarily implied in relation to boundary or ecotone but without ever being verified; it is an assumption of bioregional practice, and yet, when we turn to it, it melts into air. Hence, it can hardly be said that the identity of the ecovillager is what propagates Enright Ridge or that bioregion is what constitutes place; rather, 'practicing' place actually arises at idiosyncratic points of contact between members and non-members, between people and nature, on the margins with Capital-Nation-State at center. But that, like place, the 'reality' of Capital-Nation-State as worldview is hardly totally knowable. We live like the people of Tlön, Borges' metaphor for any catchall world order, in a labyrinth "devised by men" which we simultaneously "never quite grasp" (Borges 1962: 30). What abides in the purely spatial sense as ecotone also, as Enright Ridge has shown, abides here in the political sense. Enright Ridge is not revolutionary but a marginal movement at the limit of our social imaginary, for such radical aspirations as Seminary Square are doomed to an impasse on the way to practice, to penetration by an organization of power imbued within both how we conceive and then actually practice our spatial relations. *Ecovillagers thus do not live in place here.* One should recall that place does not exist as such, only as a condition that is best understood as space *qua* difference. Hence, it is more accurate to say that ecovillagers, like us all, live marginally, in the difference that we have come to represent as 'places.'

What we then must call for is a political ontology that is able to truly interpret and confront the marginalized living-as-if-in-place and can set its task toward a 'way out.' In short, we must call for a political analogy to the realization that bioregion is nothing but ecotone, that place is nothing but pure difference. How could this be accomplished? I refer back to the model of Capital-Nation-State and the varying modes of exchange. Whereas capital symbolizes “indirect, impersonal, and abstract market exchange,” the state symbolizes centrality, and the nation stands for “imagined unity” (Boutry-Stadelmann 2009: 343), the extent to which we can 'deny' this social formation in the same way we can deny bioregion is the extent to which mode of exchange D, or associationism, can become predominant. This entails a total remodeling of the center based not around money, the state, or the nation, but pure contingency:

If universal suffrage by secret ballot, namely, parliamentary democracy, is the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, the introduction of a lottery should be deemed the dictatorship of the proletariat. The association of associations or *assoziierter Verstand* inexorably entails a center; yet the center is constantly replaced by the contingency; the centrality of the center is displaced in this manner. *The center exists and does not exist at the same time.* That is to say, it is the concrete form of the Kantian transcendental apperception X...Our ideal organization should assume the existence of hierarchy from the beginning, except that it introduces the election and lottery to escape the stagnation of the power structure. Organization for any counteraction against state and capitalism must introduce within itself the device of introducing contingency in the magnetic power center. If not, it will be like the thing it intends to counter (Karatani 2005: 183-184).

Hence, the 'center' of a political ontology that can confront Capital-Nation-State is one that is

structured around the center's perpetual displacement. There can then be no growing roots or a nexus of any sort. There can be no cosmological arrangement or any other sense of world picture confused as the earth or the universe in themselves. There can only be that which most immediately arrives in the problematic of the other: difference.

How would we go about thinking of difference ontically? This, I argue, is the present task of radical ecology. It begins as a skeptical solution to the aporia of place—that is, we accept as our premise that space is indeed unanswerable, that it always exists beyond representation and that any claim of 'knowing' space-in-itself is erroneous. What we do undoubtedly come to terms with, on the other hand, is difference. But this is new recognition of difference is cannot be used as a means for any asymmetrical relations or system of domination of the other. Rather, it is difference celebrated as its own end. There is no universal referent; there is no assumed common center. This system, in other words, expresses itself at every possible point only as singularity. This, I argue, is the means by which we are able to collapse being and Being simultaenously with the transversal differentiation between beings. As a result, an ontology of singularity is the total extent to which the other can be 'freed' from its relation to the subject.

IV. Conclusion

A Preliminary Sketch of a Place-of-Life

Jorge Luis Borges once wrote an essay entitled “A New Refutation of Time,” claiming to have “glimpsed or foreseen a refutation of time, in which I myself do not believe, but which regularly visits me at night and in the weary twilight with the illusory force of an axiom” (1962: 191). For Borges, this refutation stems from a consideration of the precarious position of the subject in a world that appears as nothing to us but the 'now'. How, in other words, do we reconcile abstract time with the only apparent 'now?' Borges responds: the present, as the only aspect of time that seemingly exists, must be either divisible or indivisible. He rules that the present is not indivisible:

in such a case it would have no beginning to link it to the past nor end to link it to the future, nor even a middle, since what has no beginning or end can have no middle; neither is it divisible, for in such a case it would consist of a part that was and another that is not. *Ergo*, it does not exist (Borges 1962: 204).

One should recall the early exposition in Chapter 2 of Aristotle and Kant and the similarity of the argument laid out here by Borges. Aristotle, after all, ruled that time was merely enumeration and that it in fact does not exist outside of its possibility of being counted. He relied on the concept of place to still assert that the universe existed irrespective of humans. In a similar way as Borges outlines, though, it was asserted that place carries a similar problem as the present, in which it can neither be indivisible, for its boundaries are always relatively defined to other places, nor can it be divisible, for the All, the total constitution of places, exists no place, and hence cannot exist. Thus, not only must time be refuted, but, in addition, space must also be refuted.

Kant argued against such a position of pure subjectivity in saying that these concepts do indeed exist, though not necessarily knowable as such. Rather, what the human subject arrives at is always a representation of time and space. This leads, however, into the problematic of difference, which is essentially the ethical problematic of the other. How, in other words, do we square variegated representations in such a way as to not marginalize some for the sake of others? How do we live together in difference and simultaneous cohesion without electing to a system of power—say, Capital-Nation-State—that wrongfully and erroneously presumes commonality and appeal to an exclusionary and oppressive center?

There are a series of steps that I can recommend. The first step resembles Enright Ridge: to live on the margins, politically, cosmologically, and spatially. Moreover, it is the first condition of bioregionalism—that condition that admits a world beyond oneself and subsequently marginalizes the ego and claims reverence to something that lies beyond. In doing so, the sense of a dominant position over nature drops and 'we are natural' in the very first instance. Moreover, a humility sets in that, like Kant, forces a critique of our precarious position as subjects. We do not assume center, and hence, we first acknowledge our relation to meaning as always indirect, as purely representation. In his analysis of Christian intentional communities, Veling mirrors this same sentiment:

The word of God—we never really get it, do we? We never really hear it, or say it, or write it, or do it. Yet we move toward it—we feel its pull and its power—and we find ourselves, suddenly, on the way: going, listening, writing, doing, hoping. Marginal hermeneutics is a hermeneutics of 'being on the way' (Veling 2002: 178).

For Veling, this sense of “marginal heremeneutics” is rooted in a rabbinic tradition long since

marginalized by the incoming of Christianity, during which the adherence to “law” was replaced by incarnate divinity (Veling 2002: 157). The living Christ, it seemed, nullified the interpretative practice of the text, and all of the “gaps and enigmas that generated the rabbinic play of interpretation were now finally closed and illuminated” (Veling 2002: 157). No more interpretation was necessary: the Messiah had come, and the Word was realized not as something always escaping but directly within this world. The Truth, in other words, is real and immediately identifiable as such. Christ is the embodiment of Truth; Christians are directly liberated through incarnate Truth that is Christ. In contrast, the “realm of the Hebrew word *is* the realm of being and reality...The movement is not to metaphysics but to interpretation, not to transcendence but to textuality” (Veling 2002: 156). There is no seeing *beyond*, no God-in-flesh, but only interpretation, a hermeneutics wrought specifically from the loss and separation from the Word ever since the breaking of the tablets. The rabbinic tradition sees the word, as fragmented and departed as it is, as the only way in which we can live, and hence the practice of and attention to hermeneutics is essential to being. In doing so, however:

...the rabbis are not commenting on the book they have read; rather, they are reading the book in their commentary...This privileges process over product and values the ongoing event of interpretation. The rabbis can only read as they write, such that their commentary *is* the text they are reading. This is a difficult notion to grasp, for we typically think of commentary as something we write *after* reading a text, something secondary or subsequent to the text. However, the rabbis confuse this opposition between reading and writing, such that one never knows where the text ends and the commentary begins, for the two are closely interdependent and woven together (Veling 2002: 148).

The rabbinic tradition is hence always already marginal with no direct access to Truth. What appears is only Truth's sideways and indirect interpretations, reflections—the art of hermeneutics. The first step toward the political ontology is to acknowledge a reality that appears as nothing other than these representations and to accordingly marginalize one's position as subject to that of the hermeneutic, the interpreter of the book.

The second step, however, is to depart from Veling's return to Christianity through the rabbinic tradition and any other path, such as bioregionalism, which, after self-marginalization, seeks to subsume humans either under a scientific paradigm or the mystical guide of some Eternal spirit. At great pains this must be avoided, for 'We are Nature' is in this sense no less debilitating than to say 'we dominate nature:' both only confirm the world picture and remain totally non-cognizant of what William James called “the trail of the human serpent” that is “thus over everything” (1904). “Perhaps the central problem in bioregionalism,” as Taylor points out, “is that of fluid boundaries and the difficulty of demarcating what constitutes a bioregion...what are bioregional provinces but human constructions, given the many possible criteria and the need for humans to make judgments about their relative importance?” (2000:61-62). This claim however falls upon deaf ears in both the scientific and spiritual environmentalist communities. First, it is felt when positivists strive to 'know' the world by way of modeling it, and, second, it is felt when, in the Second North American Bioregional Congress, environmentalists argued over whether or not non-human organisms should be allowed to voice their concerns at such a gathering. From the science of coal combustion to the inclusion of animals at the round table in the quest to draw up a solution, the world as picture arrives first as tragedy, then as farce.

The third step is to build toward an ontology that recognizes place not as space *qua*

difference but as pure difference. At this moment, difference no longer expresses itself specifically as difference anymore since there is must be no referent. Instead, what constitutes this ontology is a multitude of singularities. This is what Agamben calls 'whatever singularity.' In *The Coming Community*, Agamben sets forth in explaining this concept by first concerning himself with the scholastic notion of *quodlibet*: “*Quodlibet ens* is not 'being, it does not matter which,' but rather 'being such that it always matters.' The Latin always already contains, that is, a reference to the will (*libet*)” (Agamben 1993: 1). Hence, 'whatever' is not in the sense that any instance of life will do in the aspiration toward a coming community, but rather, he says, “[w]hatever is constituted...by the indifference of the common and the proper, of the genus and the species, of the essential and the accidental. Whatever is the thing *with all its properties*, none of which, however, constitutes, difference” (Agamben 1993: 19). Singularity here no longer relies on power center, and it does not rely on any anterior form to explain or politically mediate itself but it is instead, directly, life. More specifically, as Agamben would later write in *The Highest Poverty*, “It is not a matter so much of applying a form (or norm) to life, but of *living* according to that form, that is of a life that, in its sequence, makes itself that very form, coincides with it” (Agamben 2013: 99). In doing so, “Singularity is thus freed from the dilemma that obliges knowledge to choose between the ineffability of the individual and the intelligibility of the universal” (Agamben 1993: 1). In the coming community, there is hence no distinction between form and life, there is only form-of-life.

In both a spatial and metaphysical sense, this can only be done, however, by submitting oneself to the marginal boundaries. Agamben indeed admits this point:

Whatever adds to singularity only an emptiness, only a threshold: Whatever is a

singularity plus an empty space...But a singularity plus an empty space can only be a pure exteriority, a pure exposure. *Whatever, in this sense, is the event of an outside.* What is thought in the architranscendental *quodlibet* is, therefore, what is most difficult to think: the absolutely non-thing experience of a pure exteriority...It is important here that the notion of the 'outside' is expressed in many European languages by a word that means 'at the door'...The *outside* is another space that resides beyond a determinate space, but rather, it is the passage, the exteriority that gives it access—in a word, it is its face, its *eidos*. The threshold is not, in this sense, another thing with respect to the limit; it is, so to speak, the experience of the limit itself, the experience of being-*within* an *outside*. This *ek-stasis* is the gift that singularity gathers from the empty hands of humanity (Agamben 1993: 67).

To be at the door is a fundamental condition of Karatani's mode of exchange D. Though Karatani notes that the “ideal organization should assume the existence of hierarchy from the beginning,” this hierarchy is intentionally broken by submitting us all to marginal positions in associationism precisely because associationsim requires the absolving of the money nexus through the designation of pure contingency in its place at center (Karatani 2005: 184). Indeed, as Karatani knows, traversal movement toward exteriority is the only place in which one can perform a transcritique, in which one can speak to the transcendental structure of being by virtue of the pronounced parallax, of the in-between. To speak of the parallax gap is to be in transition from the inside to the outside, to be in exodus.

We must then revise the narrative of Veling and marginal hermeneutics, for this is still stuck in the rabbinic tradition at the point of exodus, of 'being on the way' toward God once

more. The nexus of God, while inaccessible, is still predominant, and, as a result, intentional Christian communities do not exist as whatever singularities but constantly returning to the center. Veling believes, after all, that “intentional communities need to understand their need for institution: for the maintenance of their continuity, for preservation of their identity, and for the possibilities of networking over against the threat of fragmentation” (Veling 2002: 13). While marginal hermeneutics allowed us a way to genuinely reflect, it must now be abandoned. “If humans could...not be-thus in this or that particular biography, but be only *the* thus, their singular exteriority and their face, then they would for the first time enter into a community without presuppositions and without subjects, into a communication without the incommunicable” (Agamben 1993: 64). Hence, in the coming community there is no more referent; there is no Abrahamic, incommunicable God. As Saidel explains Agamben, “language is intimately related to our *ethos*—both habit and dwelling—our human form-of-life, and *infancy* is the transcendental condition of our entrance (or not) into language that enables us to think a community with no presuppositions, in which singular beings are exposed to the very fact of communicability” (2014: 171).

Place, like form, is here translated to the point of whatever singularity. The two must become indistinguishable in the “coming” political ontology. As there is form-of-life, there must also be place-of-life. Place has thus shifted in the coming community from space *qua* difference to difference, and now to the taking-place purely indistinguishable from life and form, all united as singularity. In an explicitly moral sense,

God or the good or the place does not take place, but is the taking-place of the entities, their innermost exteriority. The being-worm of the worm, the being-stone of the stone, is

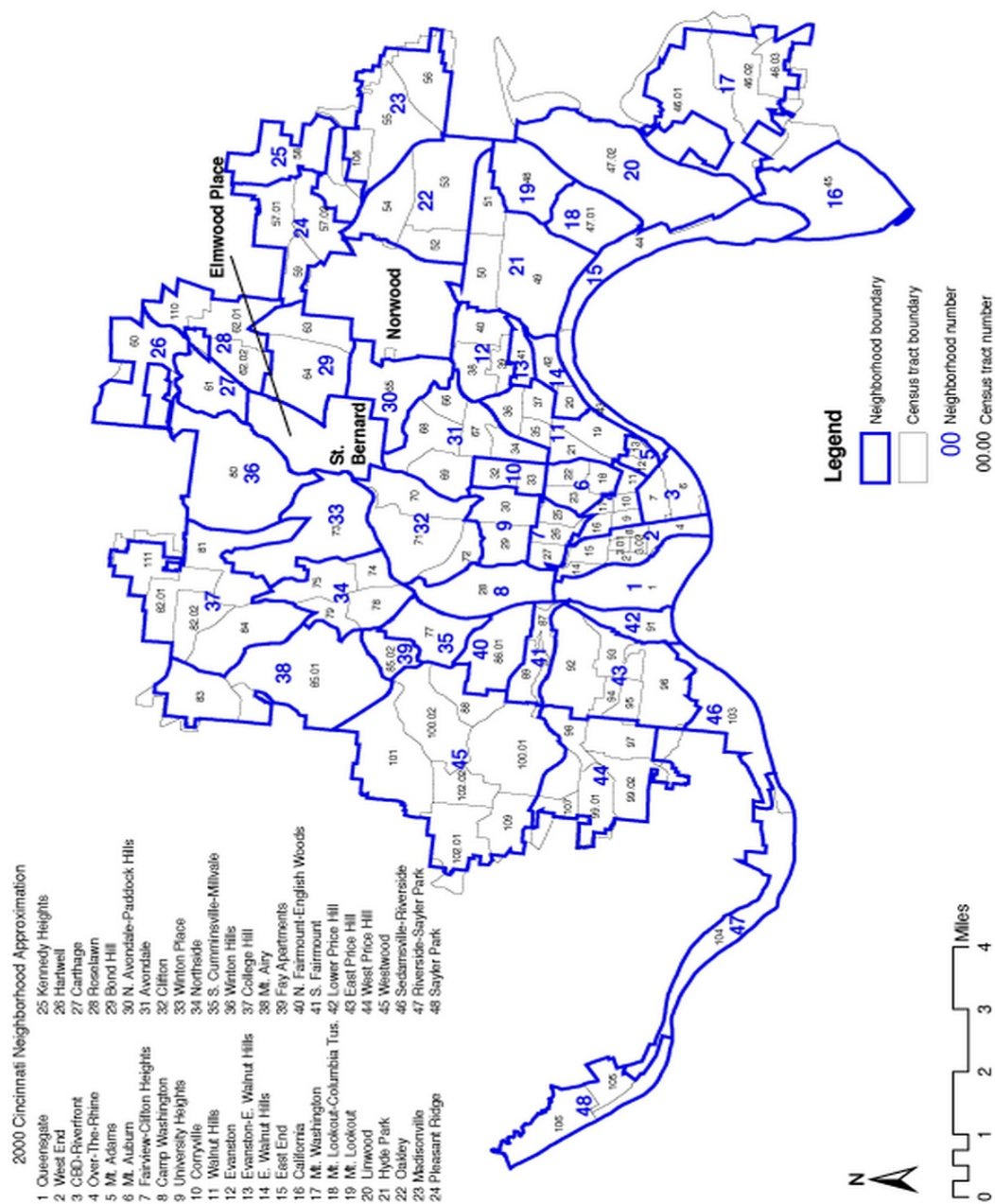
divine. That the world is, that something can appear and have a face, that there is exteriority and non-latency as the determination and the limit of every thing: this is the good. Thus, precisely its being irreparably in the world is what transcends and exposes every worldly entity. Evil, on the other hand, is the reduction of the taking-place of things to fact like others, the forgetting of the transcendence inherent in the very taking-place of things. With respect to these things, however, the good is not somewhere else; it is simply the point at which they grasp the taking-place proper to them, at which they touch their own non-transcendent matter. In this sense—and only in this sense—the good must be defined as a self-grasping of evil, and salvation as the coming of the place to itself (Agamben 1993: 15).

Goodness is hence not an appeal to or a measuring of oneself against the godhead; goodness is not dwelling poetically. Goodness is the self-grasping of evil, or, rather, the profane; it is the celebration of not how or why life is but *that* it is. Place is hence process. It is space *qua* difference in the truest sense. But place is also not a condition or control: place does not take place—it is *the taking-place*. Place is the being-such in the spatial sense; it is its own belonging; it is *quodlibet*. Agamben points to the heresy of Amalric of Bena who dared to say that “God is all in all.” “God is in every thing as the place in which every thing is, or rather as the determination and the ‘topia’ of every entity” (1993: 14). The transcendental is hence not the supreme entity hanging over this world, and it is not, after all, the hermeneutics of the rabbis—rather, it is “*the taking-place of every being*” (1993: 15). The transcendental is, in other words, *that* the rabbis speak, *that* they are. Agamben takes this sentiment directly from *Tractatus Philosophico-Logicus*: “It is not how things are in the world that is mystical, but that it exists”

(Wittgenstein [1953] 2009: 6.44). To realize this is to speak sacredly and profanely all the same; it is to speak on the margins, on the way outside, at the door, but to not look beyond for form or place, instead recognize it as *life as such*. Borges ends “A New Refutation of Time” by lamenting, “The world, unfortunately, is real. I unfortunately, am Borges” (1962: 205). This is xenophobia setting into the mystical; it is the fear of solipsism that cannot overcome its suspicion of nihilism. It is the fear of world picture as merely specter, as both there and not there. The intent of place-of-life in the coming community is to elide this anxiety: to no longer to live-as-if but to live-as-such. This is the good: it is to be in the taking-place of whatever singularity.

APPENDIX

Figure 1: The Neighborhoods of Cincinnati



Source: “The Social Areas of Cincinnati” (2000)

For quick reference, 2 is West End, 43 is East Price Hill, 31 is Avondale, 10 is Corryville



Figure 2: Imago Earth Center

Source: Sizemore (2004)

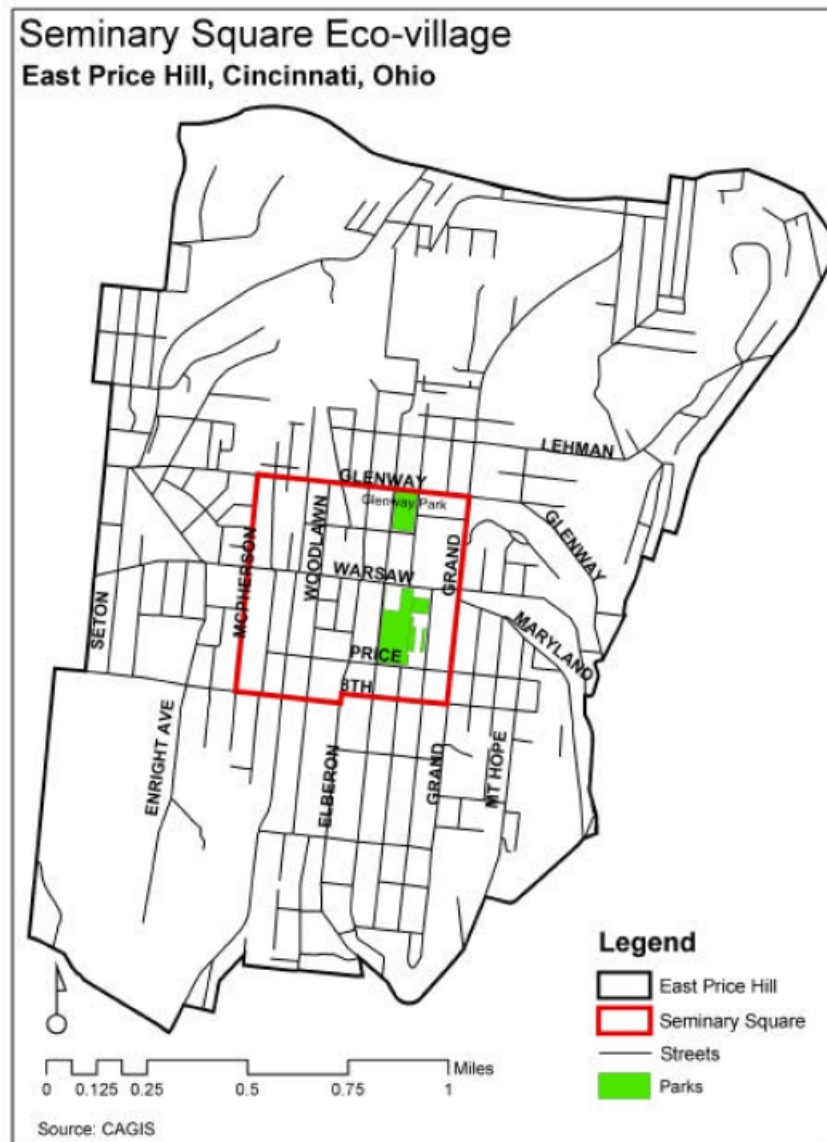


Figure 3: Seminary Square Eco-Village

Source: Sizemore (2004)

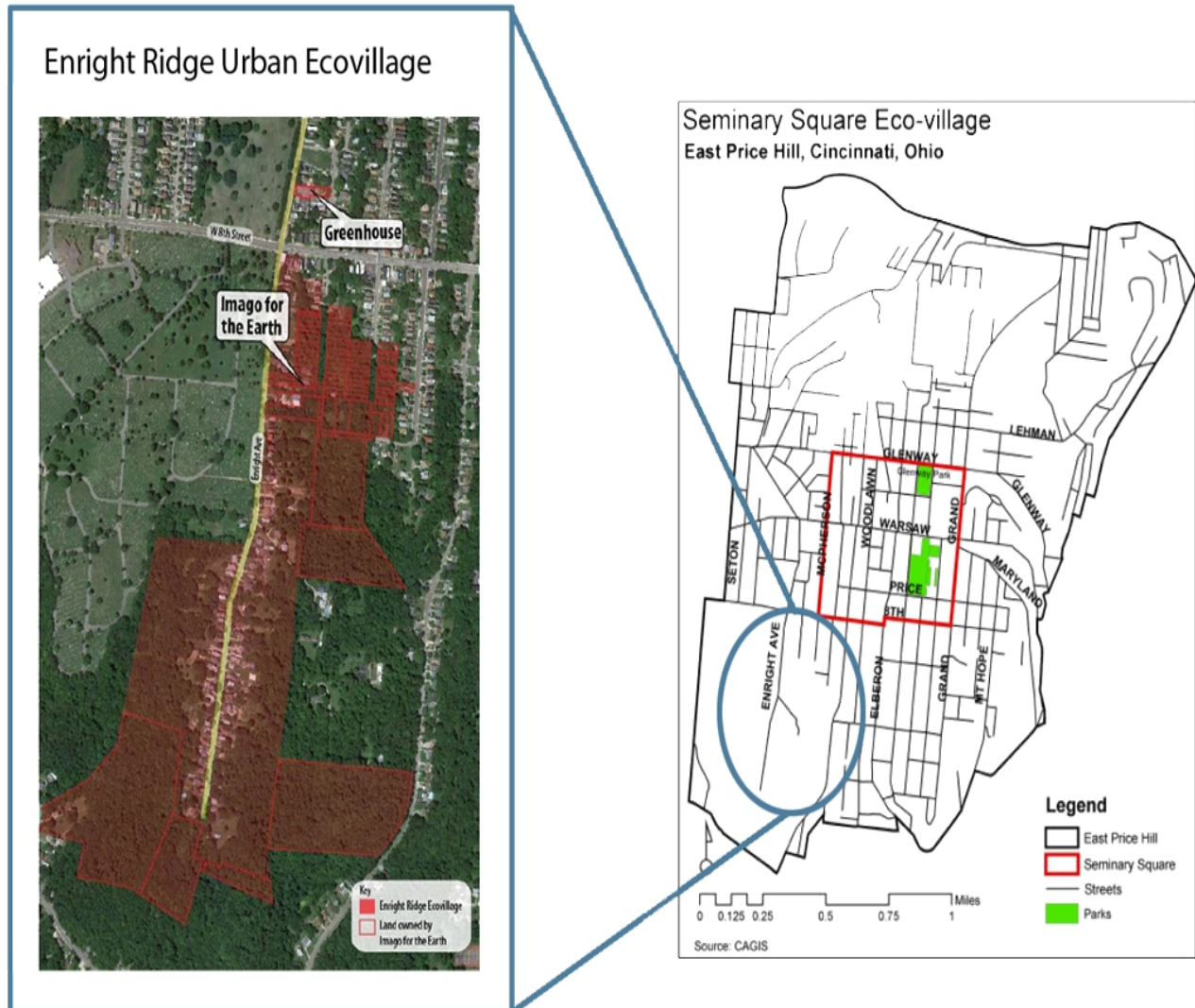


Figure 4: Enright Ridge in Comparison To Seminary Square

Sources: Seminary Square map, Siezmore (2004); Enright Ridge map, Loezir (2011)

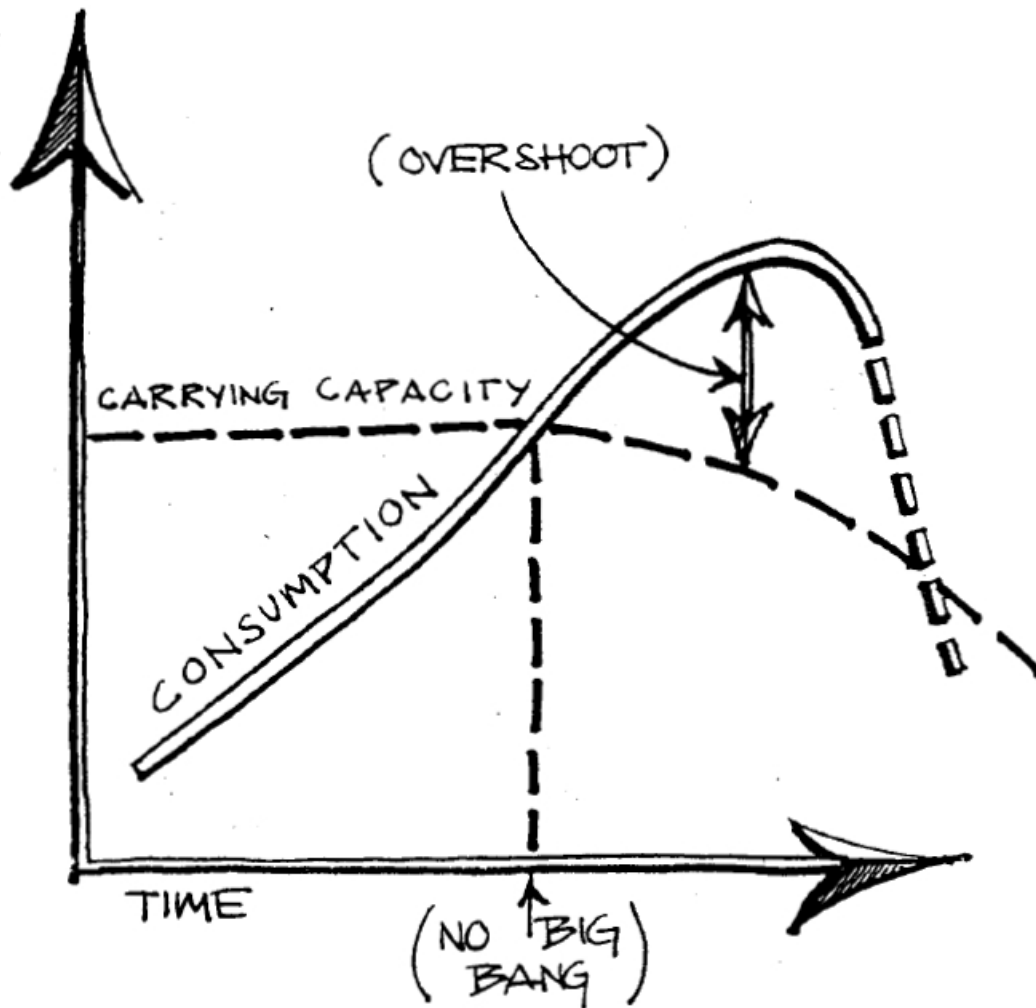


Figure 5: Carrying Capacity

Source: Taylor (2000), originally published in the New Catalyst Bioregional Series.

Table 1: Price Hill Will Mottos and Goals

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Motto</i>	<i>Goal</i>
Ecology	Price Hill is the Most Ecological Neighborhood in Cincinnati.	To market the neighborhood as a great place to live through pointing out its ecological and natural aspects
Diversity	Price Hill is Where Diversity is Valued and Appreciated	Increase awareness and celebrate diversity
Block Clubs	People Move to Price Hill Because They Want to be Close to Their Neighbors.	Promote and establish block clubs in East and West Price Hill.
Arts	The Arts in Price Hill Provide Meaning and Cultural Fulfillment.	Create regional awareness of creative and performing arts events in Price Hill.
Churches	Churches Give Life to Price Hill.	Form a large event in which all Price Hill churches will participate.
Beautification	Price Hill is a Clean and Beautification Neighborhood.	To increase the beauty in Price Hill.
Housing	Price Hill is a Neighborhood Where Most Residents Own Their Home and Rental Units are Well Maintained and Affordable.	To develop a comprehensive housing strategy for East and West Price Hill.
Education	Schools and libraries give life to Price Hill.	NA ³

Source: Sizemore (2004)—note that the education goal was not articulated at the time of

Sizemore's research.

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